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THE JAZZ AND NEW MUSIC MAGAZINE

WIRE

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say it loud

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WIRE MAGAZINE

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"I can definitely say that music won't stop. It
will continue to go forward." CHARLIE
PARKER, 1953.



COVER

John

Scofield

by

Stephen

Speller,

London

1988

WIRE MAGAZINE

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WIRE MAGAZINE

WOODSTOCK LIVES!

THE UK summer festival season continues through July with jazz extravaganzas at Birmingham, Cambridge and St Albans. The Birmingham International Jazz Festival takes place from 1-10 July and includes over 100 free events; however, non-free highlights include Chris McGregor's Brotherhood Of Breath (2 July); Cab Calloway (3); Tommy Smith Quartet (4); Cleveland Warkiss, Julian Joseph Quartet (5); Barbara Thompson's Paraphernalia (5); Morrissey, Mullen, Carr, Eyden (6); Magic Slim And The Tear-drops (7); Tommy Chase (9) and the Teddy Edwards, Dusko Goykovich Quintet (9). Full details from 021 454 7020.

Festival fanatics can then hot-foot it to Cambridge for the Festival Jazz from 16-23 July. Highlights include Dudu Pukwana's 50th birthday party and Azimuth's first UK concert for several years. The programme is Teddy Edwards Quartet (16 July), Butch Thompson, Lillian Bourke (17), Dudu Pukwana's Zila (18); The Free Jazz Quartet/Julian Joseph Trio (19); Azimuth/Human Chain (20); Jean Toussaint Quartet/Mervyn Africa solo (21); John McLaughlin Trio (22); Mel Lewis Orchestra/Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers (23). Full details from 0780 66199.

The St Albans Festival includes performances from Ashley Slater (1, 2 July); Andy Sheppard/Sran Tracey (4); Simon Purcell (4, 5, 6); Chris Watson (9); Steve Berry Trio (11); Howard Riley/Evidence

(14); Billy Jenkins/Lol Coxhall (15); Pigs Heads Sons/Paul Newman, Pete Loder (16). Full details from 891 6146.

Highlights of other festivals at Dundee, Glasgow, Grimsby and York are listed in Club Dares overleaf

MONTREUX MIX-UP

MILES Davis, Gerry Mulligan and Abdullah Ibrahim are among the artists appearing at the Montreux 88 Jazz Festival, which runs from 30 June to 16 July. Miles' band, plus the Herbie Hancock Quartet, play on 7 July; the Gerry Mulligan big band on the 11 and Abdullah Ibrahim's Ekaya on the 15 - this last as part of a piano evening which also includes the George Duke Trio, the Dave Brubeck Quartet and the Randy Weston/Monny Alexander duo. Other artists at the festival include Wynton Marsalis, Kenny G and Bobby McFerrin (10); George Benson (12); David Sanborn (13); the Carlos Santana, Wayne Shorter Band/Milton Nascimento (14) and Courtney Pine (15). Pop, folk, R&B, African and zouk are also featured at the festival, and there is a special evening devoted to Brazilian music. Details from Montreux 021 963 4643.

CRAWLEY CREEPS CLOSER

POWER Tools and the Cecil Taylor/Tony Oxley duo are among the first bookings for the Crawley (née Bracknell) Festival, which takes place from 2-4 September. Other acts so far confirmed include

the Derek Bailey/Barré Philips duo; the Alex MacGuire/Steve Noble duo; East German guitarist Uwe Kempinski; and Loose Tubes.

IT'S A WOMAD, MAD MAD WORLD

AS WOMAD moves into its sixth year, African and World Music festivals are springing up everywhere. Harambee Africa! returns for the second year to Newcastle from 21-29 July. HA! is sponsored by War On Want and Red Stripe and concentrates on African arts and culture. Featured acts this year include Bhundu Boys, S.E. Rogie, Benjamin Zephaniah, and Orchestra Marrabenta Star De Mozambique, plus a possible appearance from Mory Kanté. Proceeds go through War On Want to self-help schemes in Mozambique. Further details 091 253 3698.

WOMAD itself has divided into four parts and gone suitably worldwide. Details of the Bracknell shows (15-17 July) appeared in the June *Wire*, but there are also shows in Roskilde in Denmark (1-3 July), Toronto (10-14 August) and - as last year - St Austell in Cornwall (24-26 August). Further details 0602 785985.

And THUSA ("The Heart Under South Africa") lines up a strong bill at London's Hackney Empire (5-9 July), including such SA Jazz masters as Louis Moholo, Bheki Mseleku, Thebe Lipele, Kintone, District Six and Dudu Pukwana's Zila. Further details from Oval Arts 01-582 6279.

KNIT ON!

GLOBETROTTING *WIRE* readers may like to note upcoming jazz festivals in New York and Berlin. The pick of the '88 pack to date is undoubtedly New York's Knitting Factory Festival which began in mid-June and runs until 6 July. Sadly, you've already missed Cecil Taylor, John Zorn, Bill Dixon, Anthony Braxton, David Murray, Reggie Workman and Andrew Hill, but you may still be able to catch Billy Bang quartet/George Lewis (1 July); Seve Coleman's Five Elements/Dewey Redman Trio (2); Sun Ra (3); Michele Roseman Band/Leroy Jenkins's S'rang (4); Andrew Cyrille Trio/Charles Gayle Trio (5); Ronald Shannon Jackson's Decoding Society/Sunny Murray Group (6). Wish we were there! Further info from 212 924 7225.

Back in Berlin, the Quasimodo Club have organised a "Jazz In July" festival with Charlie Haden (4 July); Craig Harris (5); Charles Lloyd (6); Irakere (7, 8); Mongo Santamaría (9, 10); Horace Silver (11, 12); Les McCann (13, 14); Chick Corea (15, 16 TBC); Ray Mantilla (17); Tony Williams (20); Charles Tolliver (21). More dates to come. Details from Berlin 312 8086.

BOWN TO RUN

US PIANIST, singer and composer Parri Bown is making a brief UK visit in July. Bown, who has recorded with such artists as Duke Ellington, Sarah Vaughan, Charles Mingus and George Rus-



French Blue is one of the paintings and drawings from an exhibition by Shornem Latchman, "Jazz And The City" it's on display at London's Barbican Centre from 4 July until the end of the month. Mr Latchman, who is of Indian descent, describes her work as a "personal, sensitive response to a genre that is a combination of African, European, Latin and Indian influences"

sell, has lined up provisional London gigs at the Prince Of Orange (15 July); Watermans Arts Centre (22); Jazz Cafe (24); Pizza Express (29). Further solo dates are likely to be announced later

LITTLE BIGHORN

REEDS PLAYER John Williams performs the world premiere of his ten-minute piece for baritone saxophone and chamber orchestra on 3 July. The work, entitled *Out Of Focus*, was commissioned by the Chamber Orchestra Of Wales, who will be playing it with the composer at the Music Hall, Shrewsbury. Williams's other projects include The Baritone Band, the trio Spectrum, and his own octet and orchestra.

NIGHT CLUBBING

TWO NEW jazz clubs offering live music are Norwich's The Melting Pot and Bradford's Royal Standard. The Melting Pot, located in the King's Head pub, Magdalen Street, runs on Thursday nights from 8.30-11 pm and admission is free: emphasis will be on "contemporary improvisation" and each week will feature a guest player with the house bass/drums duo.

The Royal Standard, at 22 Mainingham Lane, is open on Friday nights from 8 till late and presents live bands, jazz DJs, late bar and (sometimes) food. July listings are in Club Dates overleaf

TINKLER TAYLOR

DATES FOR EMP's Cecil Taylor month in Berlin have now

been finalised. July concerts are Cecil Taylor's European Big Band (1, 2 July); Cecil Taylor and Louis Moholo (3); Cecil Taylor and Derek Bailey (9); Cecil Taylor and Han Bennink (10); Cecil Taylor solo (16); Cecil Taylor and Tony Oxley (17). For details about the concerts, and the concurrent series of workshops, call 030 341 54 47.

CAMDEN SAVED, SHAW DOOMED

"SOUNDS Good" is a new South Bank festival designed to replace the Camden Festival Jazz Week, which the rate-capped

Camden Council can no longer afford to stage "Sounds Good" will take place at the Queen Elizabeth Hall and the Royal Festival Hall from 30 June-3 July, and artists appearing are John McLaughlin Trio (30 June, RFH); Chris McGregor's Brotherhood Of Breath/Craig Harris's Tailgater Tales (1 July, QEHL); Tony Williams Quintet (with Wallace Roney and Mulgrew Miller)/Phil Bent Band/Paul Reid (2, QEHL); and Charles Lloyd Quartet/29th Street Saxophone Quartet (3, QEHL) Further details from 01-585 3075

Meanwhile, the Shaw Theatre,

host venue of recent Camden Jazz Weeks, is to close down in October. A press statement released at the end of May said that, because of rate-capping, Camden Council could no longer afford to keep the venue open. It seems rate-capping kills more music than home-taping

SUMMERTIME BLUES

COMMUNITY Music's summer school programme will include two week-long courses, plus various workshops and concerts. The first course, a "Search And Reflect" week of improvisational and rhythmic skills, runs from 18-22 July at Interchange Studios in Kentish Town and is led by drummer John Stevens; cost is £20 (concs), £40 if you're working. The second course, called "Tune Up", runs from 25-29 July, also at Interchange, and is designed for players under 21 who want to learn the basics of jazz; this one is free of charge. Call 01-729 4415 for details or to reserve a place. Also, watch out for Community Music gigs at Hackney's Chur's Palace on 1, 5, 23 July, workshops in Covent Garden on 9 July; and August workshops on the voice, studio recording techniques and steel pans.

★

LUCY

WE ARE delighted to welcome Ms Lucy Ward as our new art editor. Lucy's scintillating personality and endless good ideas (it says here) are sure to lead us on to fresh visual triumphs.

where

it's at

this

month

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| AMBLESIDE <i>Zigzag</i> | GERRY MULLIGAN | ANDY SHEPPARD/ | JAZZ CAFE | CELEBRATION PARTY 31 |
| EDUARDO NIEBLA, | QUARTET 2 | STAN TRACY 8 | CLEVELAND WATKINS 1 | RONNIE SCOTT'S |
| ANTONIO FORCIONE 1 | ART BLAKEY & THE | | ELTON DEAN 2 | IRAKERE June 6 - July 2 |
| BRADFORD <i>Royal Standard</i> | JAZZ MESSENGERS 2 | london | JEAN TOUSSAINT 5, 19 | PHAROAH SANDERS 4-16 |
| TOMMY CHASE 8 | CHRIS BARBER BAND 2 | | JULIAN JOSEPH TRIO 8 | MIL LEWIS 18-23 |
| DUDU PUKWANA 22 | GERRY MULLIGAN | TOM ALLEN CENTRE | HARRY BECKFITT 9 | ARTURO SANDOVAL |
| BRIGHTON <i>Cavendish</i> | Big BAND 3 | INC AHOOITS/ELTON | DUFF MORLORO 14 | July 25 - August 20 |
| RON ASPERY 1 | GRIMSBY <i>Festival</i> | DEAN 1 | DREAMTIME 15 | SHAW THEATRE |
| TERRY SMITH'S JAZZ | JACK SHARPE Big | ROOTABOGGA 2 | MERVYN APER A | MATHIEU SANTING, |
| QUARTET 8 | BAND/GEORGE FAME 1 | SABRICAN | (luncheon) | 16 |
| TEDDY EDWARDS 12 | 27TH STREET | JAZZ WARRIORS | STEVE BERRY TRIO 17 | June 27 - July 2 |
| PETE BURDON/DEL | SAXOPHONE | (luncheon) | CAROL GRIMS 21 | STORM CLUB |
| TURNER QUINTET 15 | QUARTET/PETE KING, | CAH CALLOWAY 12 | ED JONES QUARTET | JEAN TOUSSAINT 7 |
| CHARLIE MARIANO, | DUNKO GOYKOVICH 2 | GUIDDHALI JAZZ | HORNWEB 27 | INTO THE BLUE 14 |
| JASPER VAN T'HOE 29 | ANDY SHEPPARD/ | FESTIVAL 14-16 | MAKESHIFT CLUB | SUN SESSIONS |
| BRISTOL <i>du/Vu</i> | LOOSE TUBES 3 | BASS CLEF | PAUL ROGERS, NICK | LOU GARE, EDDIE |
| ANDY SHEPPARD 17 | MANCHESTER <i>Royal Oak</i> | INC AHOOITS 3 | EVANS, KEITH | PREVOST/EVAN |
| CAMBRIDGE <i>Parsons Club</i> | The Wall | TED CURSON 6, 7 | TIPPETT, ELTON | PARKER, MARK |
| HAROLD ASHBY 2 | 27TH STREET | BARBARA THOMPSON 10 | DIAN, TONY LEVIN | 2 SAUNDERS 6 |
| TEDDY EDWARDS 16 | SAXOPHONE QUARTET 7 | TEDDY EDWARDS 13 | MARK SAUNDERS | PAUL ROGERS, PAUL |
| CARDIFF <i>Free Bar Inn</i> | NEWCASTLE UPON | DUSKO GOYKOVICH 14 | QUARTET/PARADISE | DUNMALL 13 |
| KUST BANDIT 4 | TYNE <i>Carver House</i> | MORNINGTON | MISLAID 9 | SHIKU YANO, |
| BUTCH THOMPSON 10 | DUNKO GOYKOVICH/ | LOU KIFT BAND 17 | LUCKY RANKU | MARCO MATTO 20 |
| PAUL DUNMALL, KEITH | SID WARREN | CHARLIE MARIANO, | QUARTET 16 | CHRIS GREEN, PARNY |
| TIPPETT QUARTET 11 | QUINTET 5 | JASPER VAN T'HOE 24-28 | VIVA LA BLACK/ | WALLACE/KEN |
| JONATHAN LEWIS 25 | SHEFFIELD <i>Hallendons</i> | DON RENDELL | KEITH TIPPETT 23 | HYDER, DON |
| CHAMELEON 30 | <i>Hall</i> | QUARTET 31 | ZILA 30 | PATERSON 27 |
| DUNDEE <i>Festival</i> | ALAN WILKINSON 6 | BRIXTON ACADEMY | 188 CLUB | WAG CLUB |
| 29TH STREET | FETTERLOCKS 13 | MONGO SANTAMARIA/ | TEDDY EDWARDS, | 27TH STREET |
| SAXOPHONE QUARTET 6 | FRED FRITH 20 | LOS VAN VAN 14 | DICK MORRISSEY 15 | SAXOPHONE QUARTET 4 |
| DONALD BYRD 7 | SWANSEA <i>Monday's</i> | CANAL CLUB | ROYAL FESTIVAL | WATERMAN'S |
| MAGIC SUM AND THE | WELSH JAZZ. | LOU GARE, MARCO | HALL | ANDY SHEPPARD/ |
| TEARDROPS 8 | ORCHESTRA 6 | MATTO, EDDIE | MODERN JAZZ | CHRIS WATSON 15 |
| EDINBURGH <i>Big Theatre</i> | TIME OUT 13 | PREVOST | 9 | 1 |
| WESTBROOK/ROSSINI 15 | WAKEFIELD <i>Sports Club</i> | BILLY JENKINS 23 | SALVADORS | SHERRICK FUSION/ |
| GLASGOW <i>Festival</i> | THE BLUE NOTES 1 | HAMMERSMITH | SWING TIME 3 | HUMAN CHAIN 29 |
| GERRY MULLIGAN/ | JOHN ETHRIDGE 8 | PALAIS | SALMON QUARTET 10 | WHITE HART |
| SYJO 1 | WAVENDON <i>The Stable</i> | AIRTO, FLORA | MARTIN SPIAKI 17 | LOU GARE, EDDIE |
| MC COY TYNER, ELVIN | ANDY SHEPPARD 16 | PURKIN/PINK/ | CHRISTINE TOBIN 24 | PREVOST, MARCO |
| JONES/TOMMY SMITH 1 | YORK <i>Festival</i> | BAG FE JAZZ. | 18 | MATTO 7 |

CAROLINA BENSHEMES



PHAROAH SANDERS — at Route 66 this month

There was a streetcar from San Diego by then, but the town was still quiet - too quiet. Not hardly anybody got born here. Child-bearing was thought kind of too sexy. But the war changed all that. Now we got guys that sweat, and tough school kids in Levi's and dirty shirts...

Raymond Chandler.
Playback.



L E D

Pianist Chick Lyall

crosses all borders.

By Kenny Mathieson

B Y

T H E

LYALL first came to my notice when he led his group Green Room to the final stages of the Schlitz Jazz competition in 1986. In the Scottish heat, Chick stood out as the most accomplished and inventive musician on view. The impression has been confirmed on several very diverse occasions since, adding versatility to his list of virtues. Eclecticism can be a sapping weakness, but Chick sees it in different terms.

"In my early teens, I was interested in the avant-garde side

of rock music, which was actually how I came to jazz, people like Fred Frith, Henry Cow, Zappa. My interest in improvisation grew from that, and eventually took in the broader jazz spectrum.

"I think my work at the moment is divided into three categories. One is the solo piano work. The piano is still an instrument with amazing possibilities even though it is such well-trodden territory, and I feel I can still develop along those lines. There is my electronic music; and finally group playing is something I would like to work on when compatible musicians are available.

"I am an eclectic musician, and I accept that can be a criticism, but I feel it keeps me fresh. What is fundamentally important to me is exploration, in any area I work in."

A classically trained player, Chick has had his work performed at Glasgow's triennial festival of contemporary music, *Moira Nova*, and has increasingly found himself working towards a synthesis of classical and jazz elements with the wider possibilities of electronic music. His commission for last year's festival, *Threads*, featured an electronically created backdrop behind saxophone improvisations by Dick Lee (since repeated with Chick on piano), an area he is looking to explore further.

"When I was at University in Glasgow, I became more interested in the contemporary side of classical music rather than jazz, although I was doing some standards playing locally, but

since I left I felt that having assimilated some of the modern classical influences into the jazz influence, it is beginning to come together a bit. I am not necessarily trying to achieve a balance, but that is how it is coming out.

"I like the sound world and the vast timbral possibilities which electronics allows, it opens up new territory on keyboards. I have always been interested in free improvisation from way back, and I feel that electronic music can enhance the kind of sound worlds free players create, by creating textures and so on to work against in the improvisation.

"I am also interested in developing a range of tapes of different electronic backdrops which I can perform with as a soloist, and there is an element of composition in that. Once the tapes are complete, they are there, and each performance will be different because I can improvise in different ways each time. The way technology has developed in the last few years has made it possible to create very interesting sound worlds, and I don't think too many people are doing it."

Chick's jazz education was a little back to front, starting at the more extreme improvisatory pole (he heard Cecil Taylor play live for the first time in Glasgow last year, and admits he "couldn't speak for half an hour"), then gradually moving back into the mainstream, but it is clear from his restlessly ambitious playing where his heart lies.

"I have a growing interest in playing mainstream jazz and standards, although it is not the most important aspect of the music for me. The freer side interests me most. Early on, I was very influenced by Jarrett, and more recently Paul Bley and Anthony Davis, and the more exploratory side of the spectrum. I am working back to some extent, but not necessarily with a specific end in view. I want to keep my feet in as many fields as possible, but hopefully at the end of it I will create coherent music from them all.

"It is easier for me to work solo at the moment, because I don't have the wherewithal to get the kind of musicians around me who could do anything in depth. I can currently evolve the music to a more complex level if I am working on my own. I would like the chance to work with people who would expand and stretch me as well, though—I haven't had that chance yet."

It seems likely that he will ultimately require a move at least to London, where the healthy coterie of free improvisational players would suit Chick's purposes admirably. He is currently putting together a demo tape for a major label at David Galbreath's studio in Kinross, enjoying the luxury of time in an environment he enjoys immensely, away from the competitive arena of the stage. The tape will utilise digital sampling and synthesised sound to create an aural backdrop for his playing, but with more emphasis on "a musical rather than a sound background this time", creating a kind of chamber-group effect behind him.

"While I was at University, I saw myself as a composer, but since I left I have been gravitating more and more toward improvisation and the jazz thing. I think because it is unfettered by academicism and arcane theories. I am letting my ear guide me now."



RIP RAP

by Russell Lack

WHO CREATES the pleasure, the artist or the listener? Think about it, it's a deeper pool than first appears. With a music as tightly formalised yet as fiercely anti-collectivist as rap, the expression of emotion often boils down into rap's publicly perceived cliché of petty gangsterism. Beneath these apparent dreams of power – a cash purchase on Bigtown USA – we're obliged to dig a little deeper.

Hegel apparently had severe problems analysing the rise of instrumental music in his lifetime, so used was he to the vocal traditions of poetry and *lieder* that he couldn't accept the notion of music as a sound without a correlate in language. Within the narrow confines of pop music, rap has brought us back to language in a way that classical rock'n'roll from Elvis to Sonic Youth never quite reached. Rap is language as surface; on its uppers it's about stress, stress of course as integrative modern lifestyle, but also stress as loudness, supercharging language, anticipating minutely the beat and so doubling up the phonetic impact – it's a simple trick but it works.



Italo Calvino's novel *The Castle Of Crossed Destinies* presents a group of travellers struck dumb and abandoned in an artificial arena where their stories are reconstructed by pointing at pictures. In a sense this is the narrative of hip hop, a comic-styled cut-centric cousin of music *concrete*, a form that points out rather than in. The dream that money can buy predictably translates in too many cases into a turbo-locked brat bawl of "I want more!" Even the best breaks can't carry that one very far. If rap is to survive the 80s it has to develop its own political sensibilities and move beyond the pulp materialism that has clothed it until now.

Sometimes however, truth also rises. Boogie Down Productions "By All Means Necessary" (Jive) is at least six minutes ahead of the rest of the pack. For 23-year-old KRS One it's a complete announcement, a graphic statement of rap's current political and stylistic position/dilemma. "By All

Means Necessary" avoids the totemic sloganeering of Public Enemy's politics-as-soap-powder approach, and places the nexus of protest right up against the slinky corporate underbelly that spawned it. RUN DMC, having rejuvenated Adidas' flagging sneaker range, consolidate their position as stadium favourites with "Tougher Than Leather" – a vast improvement over "Raising Hell"; the break library enlarges and introduces this summer's ubiquitous steal, "Smoke On The Water", up and kicking as if it never left us – is nothing sacred? It crops up again on DUREK B's "Bullet From A Gun", witty compendia of London namechecks and bags of swagger. More Martin Amis than Charles Dickens, which I guess proves evolution didn't end with Malcolm MacLaren's three-chord orphans.

THE SOUND OF AFRICA

by Mark Sinker

I THINK I've announced something rather like this before, but this time it's true (I hope), to kick off a little explosion of excitement round West African sound: YOUSOU N'DOUR has finally tied the knot with a British major, *Virgin Records*, and will be recording material and releasing it here in the near future. What's more, his masterpiece *Immigré*, so far only sporadically available on import, is going to be licensed to Earthworks/Virgin.

This coincides with the awakening interest of London Records in another Parisian-African singer/musician: the much-travelled MORY KANTÉ, whose song "Yéké Yéké" made it to number four in France just recently. Provided they can bridge the communication gap with Paris – which has always been far more abyssal than similar failure between the UK and any part of Africa itself – they've a strong and important artist in their hands, a kora player who understands 80s psychofunk, a rhetorician on behalf of music who can add a new model to our understanding of the Western sound.

Another valuable connection of the same sort: Sterns have effected a selective distribution tie-up with Ibrahim Sylla's Syllart records, formalising their import strategies with the most innovative of the Paris-based labels. The three records that are first fruit of this are BAABA MAAL's *Wango*, SAM MANGWANA's *Aladyi* and NAHAWA DOUMBIA's *Dinkadi*.

Baaba Maal is often referred to as Youssou's main rival in Senegal, in that he's young, articulate (he's been through law school as well as formal musical training) and handsome. *Wango* isn't as remarkable, perhaps, as any of Youssou's recent records, but it has bright brass and attractive rhythmic crosscurrents pulling across Maal's crisply powerful voice. Sam Mangwana isn't a West African, and his record is *sakou* more

or less straight, built round his famously sweet voice.

Nahawa Doumba is a Malian, from Bougouni in Regio Fikaffo, the daughter of a well-known singer, but apparently a toughly independent force on her own, as her matter-of-factly lyrical singing proves. *Diadadi* teams her with the birdboned tensile strength of BONCANA MAYGA's arrangements, and together they're going further down the path SALIE KEFFA has been cutting.

And as a final delicious angle to the mini-flood of West Coast music, Iain Scott's Triple Earth Records have finally sorted out the problems that stood in the way of releasing SONA DIABATE and M'MAH SYLLA's *Sabel*: Diabate is the sister of the legendary guitarist Sekou "Diamond Fingers" Diabate of BREMEYA JAZZ, Sylla may or may not be related to Ibrahima of Syllart, but the two of them are members of the remarkable all-policewoman band LES AMAZONES DE GUINÉE. It would take a magnificent record to overshadow the story of its licensing (Scott first met the Guinean representatives with human bite-marks cleverly visible on his cheek — they were for a time understandably wary about further association . . .) but *Sabel* is deeply beautiful, a melange of softcore jazz and hardcore Guinean singing.

ANCESTRAL VOICES

by Brian Morton

SIX YEARS ago, ROBERT SIMPSON published *The Proms And Natural Justice*, a bombshell out of all proportion to its 64 pages. A distinguished if neglected composer, as well as musicologist and BBC music producer, Simpson risked further isolation by taking a mighty and principled chump at the administrative hierarchy.

His attack had three main thrusts. Why was the BBC's Controller, Music (a typically terse and enigmatic job description) given complete personal control until death or retirement over Proms programming? Didn't this guarantee a slow sclerosis of conservatism in the distribution of commissions, reduce the whole thing to one man's individual taste and judgement, tempered with a few gestures of pluralist tolerance? Last, why did the Proms rely more and more on pricey big-name overseas orchestras when the BBC regional orchestras represented a pool of superb untapped musicianship that, if deployed to effect, could mean a saving of — on Simpson's arithmetic — 62%? Suffice it to say that in 1982, the roof of the Albert Hall wobbled and rattled like a soup-pot, and not with the music, which was singularly dull that year.

The politics haven't changed but there is, mercifully, some awareness of the need to vary the Great Masters played by

Great Names diet with some fresher and local names. This year's Proms look the most promising in a decade, underlining again the enormous importance of the institution. The notorious "Promenaders", idiots in striped blazers and boaters who colonise the front five rows with the sole purpose of shouting "heave ho" at the men who shift the pianos or of waving obscure banners like "SIMON SHAKES HIS BABY RATTLE", represent a tiny minority even of the paying audience. What really makes the Proms significant is the huge broadcast audience.



This being bicentennial year, Australian music gets an impressive flourish as early as the second night, July 22 (and symbolically not in Albert's dome but in the Kensington *maison du peuple*, half a mile away; broadcast times will be in the press). The Sydney group Flederman give an interesting programme that features a ROGER SMALLEY premiere, *Impolites*, and two works by the promising — but increasingly fugeyish — young Australian CARL VINF, *Arta* and *Elegy*.

The first of a group of very important British premieres comes early the following week with JONATHAN LLOYD's *Fourth Symphony* (July 26). In quick succession thereafter are DAVID MATTHEWS' *Cantiga* by the Bournemouth Sinfonietta (July 27) and *Red Earth* by MICHAEL FINNISS (August 2). Finnis and ALEXANDER GOEHR will have already unveiled important work at the Almeida Festival; Goehr's *String Quartet No 1* premiered there is followed at Kensington by a first London performance of *Symphony With Chaconne* (August 25).

Other important contemporary works, not necessarily premieres, are JUDITH WEIR's *Consolations Of Scholarship* and BERIO's *Rovant 1 (For Cathy)*, given by the excellent Lontano with Linda Hirst (August 8), late-night STOCKHAUSEN and BARRAQUÉ piano at the Town Hall (August 3); LUTOSLAWSKI and BARTOK (and Anne-Sophie Mutter on violin) on the Glorious 12th; and the European premiere of an as yet unnamed new work by ELLEN TAAFFE ZWILICH, the Miami-based composer who became the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for music with her 1983 First Symphony (August 23).

*Life and death
at the point
of a needle.*

By Mike Zwerin.



AMSTERDAM. Marking eras by some event or other is bound to be arbitrary. It can, however, be said that the myth of the bebop junky, the image of jazz and drugs hand in hand, died in Amsterdam along with Chet Baker when he fell out of the window of a hotel near the dealers on Zeedijk at 3 am on Friday the 13th.

Peter Huys, his road manager, identified the body in the morgue. Chet (he must be called Chet, Baker alone won't work, Chet was his sound, there ate many Bakers but there was only one Chet like there is only one Miles) had disappeared into the drug subculture for two days before his death (he was 58). When he did not arrive for a radio broadcast in Laten the evening of May 12th, Huys had a premonition: "Sooner or later something like this was bound to happen. Everybody knew that."

An autopsy ruled out physical violence, his door had been locked from the inside and drugs were found in the room, which seems to exclude foul play. The police ate not planning to make the results of the blood test public, but it is widely assumed that there were traces of drugs in Chet Baker's blood. The police did not rule out suicide although, like most people who knew him, Huys doubts it: "It was a hot night, he was probably just sitting on the window sill and nodded out. One time too many. I picked up his things at the hotel later. His clothes were neatly folded in his suitcase. Somebody about to commit suicide doesn't do that."

Mrs Eglal Fahri, who owns the Parisian club New Morning where Chet had been appearing at least once a month, said: "We always did good business with Chet. I think one reason was that people thought each time might be the last."

May 5th turned out to be it. The German pianist Joachim Kuhn sat in with Chet that night. "He seemed very tired," Kuhn recalled; "it was so sad. I remember thinking that this can't go

on much longer."

Chet was one of the first generation of masters who created the powerful American urban music that came to be called bebop. He was the last of them to remain faithful to heroin, long after the others had cleaned up or died young. It was a love affair more than a habit.

He was no revolutionary. He was responsible for no dramatic breakthroughs on a level with Bird and Dizzy. But his sound, certain turns of phrases and where and how he placed notes have entered the vocabulary. He touched you in some summertime place where the living isn't easy. He left his pianissimo mark. People who had never met him cried when he died.

Bebop's creators had to live with critics who said they were playing "jazz" not "music". Then they heard the sounds they created turn up in acclaimed "serious" compositions and on the soundtracks of feature films. While they worked in mafia-controlled saloons and collected no royalties. They fought alienation by constructing a secret culture with its own style and language — "bad" meaning "good" is vintage bebop argot. Heroin was part of the huddle. It seemed to cure alienation for a minute.

Now big-budget movies are made about the old heroes. Dexter Gordon, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins make gold records and play the White House. Today's post-boppers wear three-piece suits, arrive on time, drink mineral water and negotiate six-figure contracts. It is no coincidence that heroin disappeared as respect arrived. The death of Chet Baker crosses the last "t" of that sad story of the bad old days.

THE CRASES on his face multiplied and deepened and

his lips turned in over the dentures he had worn since his teeth were knocked out by angry dealers in San Francisco until he began to resemble an old Indian, the last of a tribe which had seen a heap of suffering. He looked like he needed taking care of and he did and there were always people around to do it. His persistence and ingenuity in pursuit of heroin and his muse and the ability of that parched body to survive such a relentless onslaught earned him (sometimes reluctant) respect from people of all ages, races, nationalities and stylistic preference who agreed on little else. Chet Baker was the real thing.

A few years ago, he recalled how embarrassed he had been in the 50s when he placed higher than Clifford Brown and Dizzy, both of whom he adored, in the polls because he was a "great white hope" with a pretty face that reminded people of James Dean. He knew he wasn't in their league yet. In the 80s, when on a good night he was capable of playing as well as jazz can be played, he was dismissed as a has-been. White hopes had gone out of style, along with pianissimos. But it was to a large degree his own fault – falling off a chair on-stage is not a good career move.

Europeans tend to be more forgiving in the name of art, especially when the artist is an American unhonoured in his own country. He once told a reporter: "I have a medical problem and in Europe they treat it like a medical problem." So he came to Europe for love and medicine – moving around, three weeks here, two days there, in hotels or wearing out welcomes with hosts. The French adored him. He had a methadone prescription from a doctor in Amsterdam. Methadone cures the craving for heroin. On methadone alone, his grace would be unwounded. But he always returned to Zeedijk for that hot flash he needed.

The guitarist Philip Catherine describes touring with Chet: "He would drive to Paris from Brussels by way of Amsterdam. Sometimes from Paris to Paris. So he'd be late a lot and there would be some heavy panics. Sometimes the pay wasn't what it was supposed to be, or when, but there were so many magic moments in the music they made everything else worthwhile."

The Dutch impresario Wim Wigt handled Chet in Europe and Japan in the 80s. Wigt estimates that Chet earned over \$200,000 after taxes last year. The two records Chet made for Wigt's Timeless label have sold over 25,000 units each and are still selling. It is not difficult to guess where the money went.

One friend recalls Chet arriving at his house with 30,000 Dutch guilders in a shopping bag. He had recently bought a cream-coloured Alfa Romeo Giulia with Italian plates. According to Peter Huys, who drove with him often, Chet was an expert driver who would miraculously sober up behind the wheel no matter how stoned he might have been.

The lanky, bespectacled Huys looks too young to be a grandfather of two and too square to be a jazz-band road manager. He had been running a part-time jazz club when he lost his job as an electronics engineer five years ago. Knowing and loving the music, he began to travel with Wigt's clients like Dizzy, Art Blakey, Woody Shaw and John Scofield. He figures he's heard more than 150 Chet Baker concerts and he probably knew him as well as anyone.

I talked to Huys in Schiphol airport before he boarded a plane to accompany the coffin to Los Angeles, where Baker's mother owns a plot. "I wanted to be with him to the very end," he said. "I'm surprised how much I miss him."

Travelling with Chet was no piece of cake. But despite the fact that he had spent 16 months in an Italian jail and had been deported from Britain, West Germany and Switzerland, they never had any trouble crossing borders.

"Not once," Huys said. "That always puzzled me. But Chet had a good 'act' for the *danser*, he knew how to play that game. He could turn on the charm."

"He was always losing things or leaving them behind. But he was very proud of the mouthpiece Dizzy had given to him. It had 'Birds' written on it. He carried that around for years. Dizzy loved Chet."

Dizzy got him his first comeback gig in New York after he learned to play with false teeth. In a telephone interview from his home in New Jersey, Dizzy said: "The major thing he lacked – you see, Chet was so tender. Jazz is a gut-bucket thing. Great soloists have got to be able to get tough sometimes. He was too vulnerable."

Mrs Eglal Fahri says she was "very fond of him, with all his faults. He was friendly, loyal, warm. He did not forget his friends. There was something very special about him, he was surrounded by myths."

Joachim Kuhn recently found him a house to rent near his own outside Paris. Chet told him he had not had a home for too long, he wanted to settle down, work less for higher prices, maybe take some students. Kuhn heard Chet for the first time when he was eight years old in Berlin in the 50s: "He moved me so much I immediately wanted to be a trumpet player, but nobody gave me a trumpet. It would have been so great to have one of my old heroes living in my village."

Chet had been surprised and delighted when the Dutch trumpet player Evert Hekkema told him that he and his teenage friends used to comb their hair and dress like him. He had the key to Hekkema's apartment for more than two years. He paid no rent but was always arriving with gifts and never forgot to take care of his long-distance phone calls.

A REHABILITATED Dutch addict who asked not to be identified remembers seeing Chet strip naked in search of one uncollapsed vein. He found one in his groin but missed it several time until the needle finally entered. Then his knees buckled and he held on to the sink, meaning "saline solution". The former addict recognised an overdose and prepared the solution quickly. He gave Chet the syringe and this time he hit a vein in his neck on the first try.

Several hours later, when Chet had recovered and was dressing to go to work, the former addict asked him: "Hey man, don't you ever get tired of this shit?"

"It's a drag," he replied. "Hotel rooms and airports and getting guys for the gigs. I hate the road."

"I don't mean that," he said: "I mean using dope."

"Oh that," Chet replied. "I never think about that."



VON AND ON

*The senior Freeman of Chicago
talks to John Fordham.*

THE WORLD is fast running out of jazz musicians who can recall Earl Hines, Fats Waller and Louis Armstrong coming by their house for a social visit. And the odds against such a survivor also being a musician who, in 1988, could be playing tenor with four of the most prominent American post-Coltraneans – and, moreover, sounding as if he has listened closely to a mixture of Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane – are up in the “forger it” bracket. But there *is* such a jazz musician. Earl Lavon “Von” Freeman is the name, 65-year-old native of Chicago, formerly partner to Sun Ra,

Andrew Hill and Dexter Gordon, and still in his distinctive prime.

Freeman was in London in February this year, performing with his famous son Chico in a high-class band that also featured Kirk Lightsey on piano, Lonnie Plaxico on bass and the Art Ensemble’s Don Moye on drums. It was a performance that stuck, not just because it revealed Freeman Senior to be – like Miles, Betty Carter and the late Gil Evans – the kind of older player who thrives on younger partners, but also because the event spurred Chico into a more robust and exuberant manner of playing, shaken out of his frequent guise of rather implacable arpeggio-playing.

Biggest surprise of all was the live impact of the older Freeman’s legendarily curious tone. It is a snaky, staccato, sometimes squawky sound that blends fragments of bebop constructions, thematic variations running a clear line back to Lester Young, scatterings of the booming, fat-toned sound of the Coleman Hawkins school, and unexpected liberties of pitch and tuning that predate Ornette Coleman. It is Von Freeman’s unique trademark – and had he not resolutely stayed among his friends in the small clubs of Chicago and moved to New York as his son did, it’s a certainty that his name would nowadays be much better known than it is.

Freeman, a fit, stocky, affable individual, was born in 1922 in the city of Chicago, the year Louis Armstrong came up from New Orleans to join King Oliver and, as James Lincoln Collier put it “simply blew everybody else out of the city”. Freeman’s father was a trombone-playing policeman and jazz-lover, his mother had been a church musician, and all the Freeman sons turned pro – Earl Lavon on saxophones, George on guitar, Bruz on drums. Walter Dyett (a much-respected Chicago teacher who gave lessons to Ray Nance and Nat King Cole) taught the Freeman boys, and Von was at school with Gene Ammons, later to become one of the fastest and fiercest saxophonists to work on the cusp of swing and bebop. The family was full of music and the house full of musicians.

“I remember Fats Waller coming by my house and playing my piano,” Von Freeman recalls affectionately. “I still have the same one at home, which my father bought for me when I was one year old. I also remember Earl Hines coming by the house, and Louis Armstrong. He came by the house and he called my mother Pops and then he called me Pops – I was about seven years old, and it cracked me up. I was lucky, because when I came up and was ready to go out and play, Chicago was swinging. From South 63rd Street up to 66th Street, there was a club on every block – sometimes five or six – and they’d all have jazz. Even later on it was still like that. Sonny Rollins would be in the BJ Lounge, Sonny Stitt across the street, Johnny Griffin up the street, Ahmad Jamal in the Pershing Lounge. Just like 52nd Street in New York. Eventually everybody moved on to New York, but until maybe 1950 Chicago was *big*.”

Freeman says he’s been practising the saxophone pretty steadily for the past 62 years, and the nearest thing to a piece of self-promotion that emerged from him was the hesitant opinion that the best thing he might have done for his own son Chico was

Illustration by SHARLEACOCK

to show him that a jazz musician has to keep listening, and keep adapting. Von Freeman played with the early Suo Ra bands in Chicago in the 50s, and was therefore no stranger to experimentation in the period between the spawning of bebop and the coming of free form. But where did that sweet-and-sour sound come from?

"People say I've got an original style, but actually it's not. I got this way of playing from a feller called Dave Young, and I've refined it a lot from there but he was the man who first showed me a lot about mouthpieces and reeds. I've had my tone criticised, or people say I'm out of tune, but I just say they don't listen hard enough. Music is such a personal thing, it's like when you speak, you have a special sound. I might not like your sound, but you're caught up with it. You might go to voice school and learn to sound different, but if I catch you off guard or get you uptight, you'll come out. A musician might play one or two choruses, maybe three or four and try to hide, but once you get deep into it, you'll come out and express yourself."

Freeman is fulsome in his praise of jazz's brightest stars, past and present, but not without some reminders that a music depending on the cultivation of idiosyncrasies of delivery gives birth to many potential stars that circumstances never permit to shine. "There are great horn players around Chicago who aren't nearly as well known as I am. A feller called E. Parker McDougall, most people would never have heard of him. Eddie Johnson, who I play with all the time. I could go on and on, there are at least 20 great ones that nobody's heard of."

"But I can't blame anybody else for not being better known. I've always been the same, if people don't call for me, I don't go anywhere. Nobody asked me to go to New York, so I didn't go. I can't leave Chicago now because I have an aged mother there and George and I have promised her there would always be one of us with her. But I've never been fame-conscious anyway. When they'd have the big jam sessions, I'd generally stand back because I get a kick out of hearing the cats play. And I get a kick out of just studying the horn, finding out as much as I can about it."

VON FREEMAN is grateful for the breaks offered by Chico's celebrity status – his son is one of the most prominent performers to have emerged from Chicago's jazz renaissance, the burgeoning free scene of the 1960s that saw the rise of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians and the emergence of the Art Ensemble. "You have to listen to the younger guys, because they have the energy. I think Chico salvaged me a lot because when I got with him I started listening to the newer ways of doing things. But it doesn't matter what the style is. The music is always beautiful and friendly and warm and full of love at its highest level. And it makes people feel better."

"But getting to the highest level is something else," Freeman continues. This is a favourite theme with him. "You have to get that seasoning, which comes with experience. I've always tried to work toward playing anything I can think, and that's hard and takes a lot of study. If you ask me why some of the players who came out of my era were so much better qualified to improvise,

it's because they were in the dog-race where you had to get up and *force your mind to think*, not just play things you heard on records. All this is part of your training to get you to get your reflexes fast, and it's difficult to learn it. Every now and again a genius comes along of course, but all of us can't be geniuses. But it's a thin, fine strand that goes through your mind, and sometimes it takes you into another dimension. The greater you are the more times you'll reach that level. And if you don't really know how to play, you're not going to reach that level often. A lot of people expect you to get right on that plane at any time, and it's very difficult to do."

Von Freeman keeps a special place for Lester Young in the unreserved admiration he has for the great saxophonists. An improviser who preferred to adapt and mould and playfully manipulate the theme of a song rather than immerse himself in the theory of its harmonic implications, Pres's scope and the range of his moods meant that he was a hero for musicians of many different backgrounds. The fact that he inspired musicians as different as Dexter Gordon and Warne Marsh is an indication of it.

"Wardell Gray, Dexter, Gene Ammons and myself were all influenced by Pres. But so were the Four Brothers (Getz, Sims *et al*) and of course we were quite different to them. It's because Pres had two or three facets to his playing. Coleman Hawkins was mostly straight ahead, but Pres, he was like Bird. You hear people playing like Charlie Parker, and some of them are doing this part of Bird and some that part of Bird. Whereas if you play like Trane you're going to sound like Trane cos he mostly had one way of playing."

"But Pres was such a beautiful cat, man, a happy-go-lucky cat. He was the first cool cat I ever met. The Count Basie Band used to work the Rio and we'd go and sit in the front row, all us little guys, and wait for Pres to tip up that horn like this [demonstrates Young's famous sideways stance, holding out the horn like a wing] and we would start hollering out his solo and Pres would look at us as if to say 'these dummies', 'cause he would hardly ever play the same thing twice."

"I worked with Ben Webster for about six months in 1955, at the Pershing Lounge, the one Ahmad Jamal got famous in. I'd try to talk to him and tell him how much I loved him and everything, but he was going through a thing where he was saying 'nobody loves Uncle Ben any more'. I was saying his way of playing superseded time, nobody could touch his tone and his sound. But Bird died around that same time and we talked about that too."

"See, behind the masks that we all wear, musicians know this is a hard business emotionally. You're hanging your emotions out there to dry every time you get on the stage, and sometimes people maybe aren't listening – and unless you're feeling strong you will sometimes say 'why am I doing this? Let me go get an office job or something.' But most times I'm happy playing music. It isn't the money, 'cause you don't make any money, but you can be happy making other people happy through music. I've tried to keep that thought foremost in my head. If I wasn't happy doing this, I'd stop playing."



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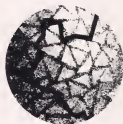
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David Murray Trio

LEEDS
TRADES CLUB

DAVID MURRAY'S impact on modern jazz has been immense. His octet managed to integrate the rootsiness and humour of free-playing into ensemble collectivity: it was where the distinctive quality of 80s jazz was first heard. Though not granted Marsalis-like exposure, Murray has played a crucial part in proving that freedom was not neo-dada provocation à la John Cage, but a logical extension of Afro-American art.

Murray's success as a leader should not eclipse his tenor saxophone prowess. With Fred Hopkins (bass) and Sunny Murray (drums), stalwarts from the 70s loft scene, the trio showcases his skills fusing the heated emotionalism and investigative freedom of Albert Ayler with Eric Dolphy's rhythmic verve and harmonic wit.

The trio opened with a cathartic blast of free jazz, Murray's tenor see-sawing on the edge of pain and pleasure, explosions beautifully stretched into Sunny's drum figures. On John Coltrane's "Mr PC" his rich, cracked tone contrasted with Trane's hard sound – the high-register fireworks were astonishing; Duke Ellington's "In A Sentimental Mood" had Murray using Ayler's tremor to add an air of helpless sincerity to the ballad's architecture. This is a saxophone that seems able to go anywhere: and the burry, blues tang in the tone – Murray's gospel cry – makes the journeying worthwhile.

Sunny Murray takes advantage of the leader's unstoppable swing to take liberties with the beat – his out-of-time hi-hat on "Mr PC" was exceptional. He's the original "free" drummer, sonic waves seething with power and delicacy. Fred Hopkins is prodigious, a show-stopper: Bach-like practice arpeggios and sudden revelations in his solos conveyed an intense intimacy, and his timbral range – folk drones, scraped distortions, big chords – is amazing.

For the encore Murray sang "Let The Music Take You" in his Hendrix-style non-singer's voice, followed by a glorious cascade of tenor honks and squeals. Jazz from the heart of the real tradition, for which musical freedom is not some alien diversion, but a hallmark of invention and ecstasy.

BEN WATSON

Ornette Coleman

LONDON
ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

DEATH IS a lonely business, but it's a good business, and the funeral parlour is invariably the last to kick when the whole town's dying. Now the morticians and the marketing men behind Endgames – "a South Bank celebration of late work" – have caught on that the kiss of Death is as good as a Warhol signature when it comes to selling a lame idea.

Lame excuse for a party or not, Death's done a good job canvassing Coleman's "Skies Of America", which, to the composer's obvious pleasure and possible vindication, is rapturously received by a haplessly full house. As to why a work that is more obviously the beginning of something never properly followed through should be included in a specious celebration of "maturity" is perhaps best left unquestioned.

tioned.

Age has not dignified the piece any; then, nor has it reduced its vitality. But since it was written – in 1971 – it has largely been accepted that group – be it jazz or rock – and orchestra don't mix and any attempt at fusion is misbegotten. So to hear "Skies Of America" 18 years after the field has been abandoned is like being a surgeon presented with a cryogenically frozen corpse and being asked to mend another age's unfortunate faith and enthusiasm for grafting together ill-fitting limbs.

It has been said that the point of "Skies Of America" is the very incongruity of its parts, and there's something to be said for that. Ornette's vision of fusion is as light separating one musical world from another, binding them in opposition, but binding them nevertheless.

Prime Time does its thing, the orchestra does something else, and rarely do they do the same thing at the same time. All well and good, so long as every part is equally compelling. The strength of heterogeneity as a composing principle resides in the mass of different, competing energies locked in each component. Its weakness is how easily the whole can be undermined by a few banal parts, even if at first they go unnoticed in the general blur of activity. "Skies Of America" is undeniably a prodigious marshalling of forces. Stated up to its blast long enough, however, and some of its constituent parts are found wanting.

The orchestral score sounds like a year's worth of *Taxi And Jerry* soundtracks condensed into a single derangement, a slippery pastiche of every music Coleman can remember, hectoring charting the zigzag course of cat hounding mouse through animated archness

parodies of musical genius at work. The cartoon effect is underscored by the orchestra's abrupt halts, to make way for Prime Time, who take their "chase the fox" routines at a tremendous gallop. Coleman's sweet, chuckling alto is hard-pressed to control his pack of guitarists, who absorb their excess energy in endlessly circling and snapping at his leads. Yet he always stays ahead, and it's the irrepressible humour of his playing that keeps the unwieldy whole lurching forward. Occasionally the light catches the wink in the bell of his horn, drawing sections of the orchestra in on the act. These are the moments that work best, when brass, percussion or strings reinforce Prime Time's assaults on speed, adding to their momentum even as they convert the group's pure lines into something denser, something resembling emotion.

BIBA KOPF

Martial Solal

BATH
FESTIVAL

THE ESSENCE of Martial Solal's style is his comprehensive harmonic knowledge, which he uses completely to re-jig whatever he is playing, a game of cerebral whimsy whose object is to get away from a song's original harmonies as quickly as possible. Opening his first UK appearance in ten years with "Here's That Rainy Day" the French virtuoso gradually eased himself into the game of subtle harmonic substitutions he would play all evening. With playful allusions to stride piano and Tatum-esque runs that deliberately ended in dissonance, the song gradually became submerged in chromatic re-harmonisation. The depth of Solal's harmonic reconstruc-

ORNETTE COLEMAN by Andrew Feldman



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tions is awesome; "All The Things You Are" was glimpsed obliquely before succumbing to Solal's sophistry. Block chords see-sawing across the beat, whirlpool rubato passages, polytonality and Trisano-like complexes subvert the song into an intensely personal creation from which allusions to other distant, but related, songs drift in and out of focus.

Solal's reharmonisation goes further than Tatum ever dared go, and only the robust structures of the American Popular Song seemed able to withstand his harmonic subversion and in a way prevent Solal's work from launching into total abstraction. He seems to occupy a position in jazz similar to that of Don Byas, with whom he played frequently in the 50s. In the same way as Byas stood in relation to swing and bop, Solal stands in relation to bop's harmonic labyrinths and the freedom the likes of Cecil Taylor seized. His style is wholly individual, its mesmerising complexity still to be uncovered this side of the channel.

STUART NICHOLSON

Anthony Braxton

LONDON
ICA

ANTHONY Braxton is a remarkable musician by any standards, and in most of the wide-ranging formats in which he conducts his singular explorations, but he has no better showcase for his work than when playing in the form which he himself nurtured. Braxton was not the first player

to record solo saxophone, but it was his *For Alto and Saxophone Impressations* - Series F albums which gave shape and stimulus to what has become a productive field.

As this packed London appearance convincingly demonstrated, solo saxophone need never be considered a limited area for exploration. Braxton produced a relentless series of short pieces on alto which spanned jazz standards to Coltrane's "Impressions" and "Naima", almost Philip Glass-like harmonic structures to free-form investigations of the subterranean reaches of the horn, barely articulated breathings to sudden overblown eruptions of sound or furiously sustained circular motifs, and one remarkable section which I can only sheepishly liken to an excellent imitation of a barking dog.

It was a reminder, if anyone needed it, that while Braxton may devote much time and energy to composition, he remains one of the undoubted contemporary masters of his instrument (and not only the alto, either), playing with immense technical control and an inexhaustible, inspired inventiveness. The pieces came almost too fast; no sooner had we sat back trying to absorb one than he was off again at an entirely different, equally dizzying musical tangent, chasing some new strand of thought or feeling.

As the two sets unfolded, though, it became increasingly obvious that what we were hearing was not simply a series of inter-linked works, but an evolving grammar of the language of solo saxophone, syntax and semantics rolled into one, which tested not only the palpable brilliance of the player, but the limits and possibilities of the instrument itself. The result was a memorable, inspirational recital from a

musician of boundless (and sometimes over-reaching) ambition, working in his smallest, but arguably richest, form.

KENNY MATHIESON

Joe Henderson

EDINBURGH
QUEENS HALL

"I DID a lot of homework early on . . . I got to know that how you *begin* a solo is probably the most interesting part. But after you do it for a while, you become one with the whole process . . ." Maybe there's one or two voices raised even now to question whether Joe Henderson's playing is (as two recent albums assert) *State Of The Tower*. They should have been stilled by the way he began the first ballad of his Edinburgh sets. A short unaccompanied entry then the sax held obliquely for an oblique statement of the theme (Monk's "Ask Me Now"), full of little trills, triplet figures, soft against the background of the quiet brush-strokes. Prerogative, but intense and thoughtful too, it's rarely that an audience will find a ballad-statement so compelling, will listen with such rapt attention. A master at one with the process of improvisation.

Voices have also been raised to query the standard of Joe's recent backing. Well, on the evidence here Jack Greig may be a solid bebop bass player but the female half of the ticket is something else. Jazz badly needs more statements against sexual inequality and if you've never heard a female drummer before you should start with Cindy Blackman.

Irene Rosnes on piano, too, was a tireless developer of motifs, her solos well-paced and structured. A band of structuralists, in fact.

The concert opened with

"Records-Me" - but wait a minute, my Joe Henderson adviser tells me that when it's played up-tempo, and it was, it's called "No Me Esqueca". Authorities dispute over the Rollins and Coltrane influence on the tenorist's style and I'll just muddy the waters a little more by noting a Chu Berry connection in the crying high notes here. But really it was just Henderson himself all the way, through a collection of standards ("All The Things You Are", "Body And Soul") and originals ("Isotope", "Inner Urge"). After the concert my adviser asks Joe for a lesson. He's just had one.

ANDY HAMILTON

Lontano: "The Eclectics And Beyond" II

LONDON
QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL

A CHEERFULLY eclectic little virus or spirochete kept me from the first - and trans-Atlantic - half of Lontano's new music showcase at Queen Elizabeth Hall. Reports and opinions vary on the relative merits of the two evenings but suffice it to say that if the first was no less interesting than the concluding programme, it was still one of the most interesting new music events of the year so far.

"Eclectics" I featured the world premieres of Martin Butler's *Tin Pan Ballet* and Daniel Asia's *Pines Song*, with work by William Kraft and the flautist Robert Dick. Part two hinged on the premiere of Poul Rouder's *Dramaphona* for piano and chamber group. It marks the first - with *Mosadrasna* and *Polydramata* - of a three-part "inner theatre" which in philosophy and in elements of the beautifully conceived instrumentation is reminiscent of

CYRO BAPTISTA by André Patigny



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Buttwhistle, not least the avoidance of ostentatious ostinatos where simpler presentation of ideas is every bit as effective. Much of the fascination lies in Rooder's rhythmic grasp, also evident in the concluding piece *Four Dances In One Movement*. These are marked "Whispering", "Rocking", "Ecstatic" and "Extravagant", but each contains at least the central germ of the others. Originally for the London Sinfonietta, the piece now has an impressive rival interpreter, every bit as committedly polished as the more established group.

Elliot Schwartz's Chamber Concerto is, an academic homage to Charles Ives, full of curious reversals and repetitions, and scored in such a way as to suggest three or four pieces of music performed simultaneously. Ten years old, and receiving its first British performance, it shows no signs of having matured into something more substantial.

If Schwartz disappointed, it was good to find the best work of the night, the opening piece, coming from a Scot. (It was simultaneously depressing to find that Gordon McPherson was born in 1965. Sign of age, when the composers start to get younger.) In *Prosa*, a prize-winning piece from last year's Yorkshire Young Composers awards, McPherson returns to the pipe music and hymn descants that were more remotely audible in *Islay Dots*, a dance piece, and *Ebb*, unusually scored for lute. It's romantic music but without the soft centre of so much English landscape-inspired composition.

BRIAN MORTON

Clifford Jordan

LONDON
BASS CLEF

"I'M DEXTER," said Clifford, introducing "Round Midnight" and affecting to be "the star of the movie." Mr Jordan is no pseudo-Gordon, but it was an evocative quip. The Bass Clef is maybe the most stereotypical of jazz clubs, an atmospheric basement room, the bottom half of blocked-off windows cutting into the walls, the bottle-borne candles dancing on the tables. Life diverges from the films in one important respect though: the musicians persist with their noise even while people are trying to talk.

Jordan cut an imposing figure on the low-ceilinged stage. Stratchy too. Besuited, bespectacled, neat greying hair and beard, he stands upright, scarcely a movement except when he averts his head momentarily to moisten his lips between phrases, retiring to lean calmly against the side of the stand when the spotlight is on the other musicians. Ira Gitler once noted that Jordan "was a thinker and lyricist rather than a saxophonist who ran off at the mouthpiece". This remains true. He is not a spectacular player, but he can play rough when necessary. That version of "Round Midnight" featured a tenor solo with an armour-piercing tone, and the whole piece avoided sounding like the shadow of a Monk cut without violating the spirit of the ballad.

Other homages to the pioneers came with Charlie Parker vehicles - "Passport", "Star Eyes" and an excellent "Quasimodo" which early reverted to its natural state of embraceable looseness - and a magnificent hard-driving "Bags' Groove". On this third night of the saxophonist's stint

the house trio meshed superbly, Peter Ind's enjoyment flowed into his playing, John Pearce was in good form especially on "Laura" and "Bear Cat". Bill Eyden was fine too.

BARRY WITHERDEN

Derek Bailey/Cyro Baptista

LONDON
CLAPHAM SUN

IF COLLECTIVE improvisation exists as a complex accident - be it happy or catastrophic - it takes no small amount of engineering to bring divergent forces to those points of collision that justify the joint venture.

But even the best planned accidents can miss, when projectiles miraculously resist the gravitational tug of the G-spot and carry on spinning their own sweet ways, oblivious to life-energies of others in the room. Targeting "hot" Cuban percussionist Cyro Baptista and "cool" European guitarist Derek Bailey is certainly strategically sound on paper. This unlikely pairing orbiting the Sun's crowded fireside room most sorely result in a pile-up of Bailey's flattened chords, strong along frayed and zinging metallic strings, and Baptista's formidable battery of clattering metals, rustling bells, wind sounds and marmalade rumbles. When such alien musics collide an astonishing fusion should emerge from the black heat and smoke of the catastrophe. Alternatively, they might more gently rob up against each other and tentatively and tenderly explode possibilities of communion.

In the non-event neither catastrophe nor communion occur in the shadow of the Sun this time. Both players track their own unbending trajectories - Baptista's a terrene trail of frenzied activity, Bailey's an

impervious crustacean crab-walk across space. Their respective approaches are so far removed as to defy any chance of contact.

Baptista's invention has largely been absorbed in his impressive inventory of instruments. Having brought them along he's going to make damn sure he hits everything at least once. As he bosses himself filling in silences, the seated Bailey calmly spins a metal gossamer sound shield behind which he puzzles and resolves how to keep his crustacean scuttling this way and that, eluding as best it can any extant musics. With a minimum of fuss he quick-clusters notes of magnesium brightness and duration, or rolls out gentle sonic booms that sound briefly and brilliantly before being swallowed up in the blackness. The crustacean leaves no traces that might mark the way back. Bailey remains out there somewhere, lost in space, pressing on.

Every so often Baptista's rising dins penetrate Bailey's sound shield, giving the guitarist an occasional boost. But Bailey's responses - jamming his fingers into the strings and rattling off some tremendous hardcore - oddly serve to silence the percussionist, as if his sole intention was to get a rise out of his partner, by way of acknowledging his presence. If Baptista feels somewhat peeved to be invited to party and then ignored, then courtesy would rule in his favour. But a pout hardly constitutes a catastrophe. And though no collisions occur, nor, indeed, any prolonged coalescence, Bailey's self-absorbed and totally absorbing crustacean skywalking is spectacle enough. Only drooling ambulance chasers are disappointed that the accident didn't happen.

BIBA KOPR



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HI FI NEWS



Elliott Sharp,

avant-garage

guitarist.

By Dave Illic.

Y A N K E E

Y A H O O

THERE'S NO such thing as an innocent, uneventful first-time stroll through downtown Manhattan. Keep your eyes peeled, and the schizoid, speeded-out facets of the city explode all around. No two streets are the same: not just that, the racial and physical make-up can change from block to block. The neighbourhood mentality possesses a racy and distinctive edge, where co-existence,

rather than integration, is the order of the day. Like a giant cauldron, its underside licked by the intense heat from the street, its contents have curdled, not blended – rather like yoghurt gone past its sell-by date.

It's that same character which you'll find at the very root of New York's art. Elliott Sharp – multi-instrumentalist, composer, improviser, theorist and performer – one of the current major forces in the downtown avant-garde, refers to it as a deep-rooted cynicism: "New Yorkers are really known for that. The local bands have a very different edge; the rhythms are faster, and that really goes for everything – bebop, funk, improv . . . There's a certain tightness and economy too: there has to be because there's so much information going through."

The same is true, it seems, when attention turns to cultural politics. "Music and politics are pretty much separate lives for most people. To integrate them, you really have to adopt fairly subtle means; you can never be too explicit. People have learnt to switch themselves off, simply because there's so much of a media assault."

Sharp, like many of the emerging faces from the downtown scene, wasn't born in the city, but moved there later in life. His music is very much the product of existence inside and outside of New York; feeding off its characteristic energy, reflecting the cultural/ethnic diversity of his surroundings, while also boasting a myriad of interests from other walks of physical and cultural

life: from University in '73, where he studied composition and ethnomusicology with trombonist Roswell Rudd; from Buffalo the following year, where he became involved with the Center For Creative And Performing Arts.

"I thought of it more as a centre for the new music of the 50s. Morton Feldman was one of the teachers there: I had several bad experiences with him, but he taught me a lot – particularly about devising systems for improvisation."

He'd always played music from being a kid: the piano, aged six; the clarinet two years later. In '68, he got his first guitar – which eventually led him into noise manipulation. "Officially, I was studying to be a scientist; unofficially, I spent my time building fuzz boxes and other devices." He landed up playing in a psychedelic band, aspiring to his idols of the time, Hendrix and The Grateful Dead. "It was a great time – four gigs a week, good money. We were just flailing about, and it wasn't until after that that I really learnt to play." He'd also been introduced to the work of John Cage and Harry Partch around the same time, influences that would lead him in the direction of the avant-garde and, in turn, to developing his own kind of garage-classicism.

Arriving in New York towards the end of the 70s, he first became visible as a free improviser. A stream of records on his own Zoar label quickly followed. Then, a more intricate system of filtering his musical predilections with the vabe of the city began to manifest itself. *Low* took to the improv/funk unions *a la* Material, only coming in more from left-field, possessed of a driving polyrhythmical underbelly. A subsequent group project, Carbon, took it further, lacing the mix with techniques adapted from non-Western musics.

He still improvises, but largely within structures – specific textural or rhythmical bounds, rather than assembling free and the myriad of compositional forms into collage. The words "filtering" and "processing" are never far from his lips. "Improvisation is what gives the structures life. You see that more in non-Western musics – there's a particular spark because it's so crucial a part of the music."

It's only latterly that Sharp's output has been *seen* to expand. With *The Semantics* (Sharp, plus drummer Samm Bennett and reeds player Ned Rothenberg), he explores a rustic extemporal music rooted within more conventional Western fields – rock'n'roll and the blues. New-tech and Sharp's home-made instruments, the Pantar (an amplified, flex-cymbal with strings) and the Slab (a would-be primitive version of a Hawaiian guitar,



but used more percussively, and with an altogether more threatening sound), have opened the ways towards new compositional techniques and sound-sources. With the Californian indie-label SST, Sharp has committed both neo-pop songs (*In The Land Of The Yabous*) and a string quartet (*Tesalatron Row*), utilising "just intonation" and unusual preparations of the instruments – textually akin to the gut-wrenching electric sounds capable from Sharp's guitar! – to vinyl.

Moreover, there's an increasing armoury of performers with strong musical personalities – drummers Bobby Previte and Charles K. Noyes, turntable whizz-kid Christian Marclay, The Soldier String Quartet, and electronics-manipulator David Fulton – developing as a ready pool of musicians to work and develop continuity with.

With Brooklyn Academy having finally latched on to majors from Lower East Side as serious contributors to contemporary American culture, it looks as if there's still a hell of a long way yet to go.

SOME RECORDS

Low (Zoar 7); *Tjibere* (Zoar 14); *Carbon* (Zoar 15); *Marco Polo's Argali* (Dossier ST 7508); *The Semantics* (Review rere 84); *Virtual Stone* (Dossier ST 7526); *In The Land Of The Yabous* (SST 128); *Tesalatron Row* (SST 129).

THE WINE

of

SILENCE

*Robert Fripp
concludes his series
on The Art Of Craft
with an empty cup.*

THE FIRST thing a teacher learns is the impossibility of teaching. So, the teacher is immediately a student, their own apprentice. Except, in learning a craft, they have learnt the laws of learning, and these they can apply to themselves in the craft of teaching a craft. The craftsman knows that, in a sense, they are their craft: they are the embodiment of the particular forces and qualities which make the craft recognisable. A craft brings together two incompatible worlds, the life of the craftsman reconciles the impossibility. If they move themselves out of the way of the craft, perhaps the craft can speak directly to the apprentice. So, the role of the teacher is one of acceptance. The aspiring apprentice embodies the quality of affirmation: I seek music, help me. The craft itself is the agent of reconciliation.

In the craft of guitar playing, playing the guitar is not about playing the guitar: it is about playing the guitarist. But, who is playing the guitarist? Making music is not about making music, it is about making the musician, when a musician is made, so also is music. Nevertheless, music is never absent.

At this point, the teacher will be dealing with the erroneous notions of the apprentice. The apprentice musician, for example, has many bright ideas about the life of the musician. Perhaps, even, how to make the world a better place with music.

The teacher will give clear instructions to the student, so that the pattern within the craft is clearly presented in a practical, coherent and satisfying manner. Then, the teacher will confuse the student. The mind holds the pattern in front of us, guides us towards where we are going from where we are going, and shows us our place in this pattern at any moment. This is valuable, and if we intend to participate fully within a process, even necessary. But part of the mind will identify the craft with a set of rules, as if the craft itself is merely a method. The keen, dedicated apprentice will display their knowledge and broadcast their adherence to their craft, proclaiming the details of their instructions: clear, intelligible and coherent. Swelling with their rich insights gained in the presence of authority, they misrepresent their craft. The apprentice believes they have understood, that an idea has come to live in them. They have forgotten that the teacher is also an apprentice, and making the same mistakes on behalf of the craft as they. Hopefully, the quality of the mistakes is higher, even, that no mistakes are being made. And they may not understand that their teacher has been tricking them. Part of this trickery is in presenting the craft as a rational, coherent and intelligible method. Then, having granted the apprentice the security of allowing their mind to fix upon this true pattern, the mind is disturbed. The mind may never become an honest or trusted servant, but if it is robbed of its seeming intelligibility, its pretensions are easier to dispute.

The craft can be known, and reduced to a series of formulations, or descriptions. It has a pattern which can be learnt, held and absorbed, and then described. But this is not understanding. When one attempts to penetrate a craft by knowing, it eludes us. This is where we approach the mystery within a craft: it is closer to us than we are, but what can we do about it? So, the teacher disturbs the mind of the apprentice, that its hold upon them weakens. In the moment of release, the apprentice has an experience of what it means to be a master: a state of letting go, constantly, a state of application, constantly, an innocence within the

contradiction of acting and not acting. This is artistry: acting with the assumption of innocence within the field of experience. Knowing this in the moment of abandoning reliance upon the infallibility of the mind, the student knows within their own experience the quality of abandonment. This quality can now always be consulted, and drawn upon. The apprentice has had an insight into the world of the master. Then, they fall to earth.

The teacher will recognise the bruises: they have many of their own in the same places, as well as elsewhere. Whether they offer the apprentice a salve or a hard seat will depend upon the nature of the student and the situation governing them both. Until now the teacher has been tricking the apprentice until the point of falling to earth. Now, the apprentice has seen what is necessary for them to continue, and can choose to continue or not. Before, there was mostly imagination. The teacher's trickery has sought to keep the student within the craft, despite all their conceits, arrogance and erroneous notions. Part of the trickery has been flattery, reassuring that part of the student which is genuinely in search of the craft. Part of the trickery is free gifts, perhaps introducing the student to live performances, or touring, even making records. The performance of music is a privilege, and the price for acquiring this privilege is high. For the apprentice to be granted easy access is a gift, a free gift, the cost of which is shared by the teacher and the craft. Some students will return for flattery, for the nourishment of their imagination. The teacher will judge the situation nicely, perhaps continuing to flatter that which is less in them, in hope. Perhaps not. Some students will return for free gifts, or even ask that they be notified when free gifts are to be distributed. And some students will recognise the teacher's bruises as their own, and offer salve.

The teacher has the protection of the role of teacher. The craftsman in this role will probably confuse themselves with the teaching, and acquire fresh bruises. But sitting squarely on a hard seat with bruises smarting, will keenly remember their presumption and not entertain this conceit again. And this is their safety: in letting go of the idea, the reality occurs, and the craft speaks through the craftsman.

THE STUDENT discovers that the answers they receive are generally not the answers they need. Then, they discover that the quality of the answers is governed by the quality of their questions. Sometimes, as a gift, they are given an answer to the question they should have asked. Sometimes, they are given the gift of no answer at all. Sometimes, they get silly answers.

The apprentice, at first, sees the teacher as an Ideal Being, probably perfect. Then, the teacher is released from the humiliation of perfection to the humiliation of imperfection. The alert student, seeing the teacher as an apprentice-teacher, sees an apprentice, the same as them, with the same struggle, and then a deeper relationship is possible.

The teacher's power to help is exceptionally limited. It is a mistake for the teacher to believe that they can help the student. Nevertheless, although help does not come from the teacher, it can come through the teacher, providing the teacher is not in the way of that help. The erroneous notion that the teacher teaches is one way of blocking the help available from the craft.

The teacher has the protection of their role, the free admission of their

ignorance, and their experience. The role provides the connection with the craft, the admission of ignorance is unarguable, and experience is undeniable. If in doubt, consult the hands: what do they do? What is the quality of sensation within them as the fingers move in a delicate co-ordination? What do I feel at this moment? What pattern is in the mind? What am I thinking about?

The craft is this distinctive quality, or recognisable force, within a tradition, all of the craftsmen within this craft that have even been and will ever be, and all their acts of craft. The act of crafting is the craft. At this point, there is no distinction between traditions: all crafts are the same crafting, in the creative act of artistry.

IF MUSIC is quality organised in sound, the musician has three approaches towards it: through sound, through organisation, or through quality. The apprentice will approach the sound, the craftsman will approach the organisation of sound. The master musician approaches music through its quality, that is, they work from silence, organise the silence, and place sound in-between the silences. The master musician will also be able to organise sound, and produce it.

Some traditions assume the virtue of the master musician, with whom we be equal in aspiration, even in commitment, and approach music by cultivating silence. Then the apprentice approaches music from silence by being silent. We only discover the quality in music if we discover the quality in ourselves. Luckily, music knows itself better than we do and sometimes whispers in our ear.

While cultivating silence, we approach sound. When our note is true, we are surprised to find that it sounds very much like silence, only a little louder.

Honor necessity.

What is necessary is possible.

Music is a benevolent presence constantly and readily available to all.

Music is the cup which holds the wine of silence: sound is that cup, but empty; note is that cup, but broken.

Music is a quality, organized in sound.

The art of music is the music itself.

Music is unable to be heard that it sometimes calls on unlikely characters to give it voice.

How we hold our pitch is how we organize our life.

Be very careful about the beginning.

Then, be very careful about the end.

Then, be very careful about the middle.

Craft repeats the repeatable.

Art repeats the unrepeatable.

With craft the musician can copy something old.

With discipline the musician can copy something new.

Craft maintains skill; discipline maintains craft.

Craft follows the tradition; discipline maintains the tradition; music invents the tradition, by instructing the genius.

Even genius doesn't need an insouciant technique.

HARD PICKINGS:

John Scofield

Loud, live and electric

ELECTRIC GUITARIST John Scofield, besides being a devoted family man, is an 80s road warrior, hustling a band of loud and funky jazz guys through the travails of clubdom.

"I like to play these secondary markets where there are these interesting old clubs with good PA systems and terrible atmospheres that have been there 20 years," he insists one morning over coffee, after walking his daughter to a Greenwich Village school. "In Montreal, Boston, Providence and New Haven — places that have had everybody from AC-DC to The Dirty Dozen in them. I love it."

Scofield sounds convinced, and convincing. What else is there, anyway? Since the mid-70s he's expanded credibly on the blues with Jay McShann, Mingus, and Miles; recorded four hook-laden albums (most recently *Loud Jazz*) for Gramavision and a handful of farther-flung trio, quartet and quintet LPs (like *Bar-Talk* — all *extended* intended) for Arista and Enja; collaborated in the frontline of Marc Johnson's Buss Desires with Bill Frisell; worked with Ray Anderson, Chet Baker, Gary Burton, Dr John, Bobby McFerrin, Wilson Pickett, and Bennie Wallace, among many others.

Sco's a player — he *lives* to get with other players, and preferably an audience, the same way most folks have to get up, go to work, deal with colleagues and customers or clients. He has few pretensions or illusions about making music, but it's more than a job. Scofield lives clean with his wife Susan (she provides his song titles) and kids Jeanie and Evan. He shirks no responsibilities. He *likes* what he does. It keeps him in touch with what he loved as a teenager — "The old stuff I liked a while back: Memphis, New Orleans, the blues, I keep hearing those

NEW YORK EXCLUSIVE

BY HOWARD MANDEL

PHOTOGRAPH

BY STEPHEN SPELLER



influences in pop music." He brings enthusiasm to his gigs, wherever they be.

"We were in New England for a week, and now we're going back out again to Pittsburgh, Detroit and Chicago," Scofield explains. "Then I'm home for a few days, do the West Coast, and Great Britain. With the *Blue Matter* band that routed England last November. We've been together about a year and a half." Keyboardist Robert Aries, bassist Gary Grainger, the drummer Dennis Chambers (late of Parliament-Funkadelic) form his most stable quartet since Scofield cut a studio album with guests Dave Sanborn and Ray Anderson amid his multi-layered guitars and bass.

"*Electric Outlet* was an overdubbed record," Sco says. "I'd always wanted to try that. I was working with Miles, and I'd just gotten one of those four-track home demm set-ups. So I put down bass parts, laid in the drum machine, and said, 'This is the way to do it!' I was really into that process. I still like the idea of stacking stuff up, but there's nothing like getting a feeling from live players."

"I think the more you record, the better you get at being able to do in the studio what you do on a good night in a club. It's hard now, because we're seeing these magnificently sculpted records from the pop world that are laboured over for years. It's a temptation to make records like that—little gems. But I'm trying to get spontaneity in there, too."

SPONTANEITY ISN'T in short supply, on records or in his performances. One pleasure of witnessing Scofield during his time with that master of the moment Miles Davis was hearing his confidence in response to the trumpeter's unpredictable moves. Soloing, Scofield wasn't in competition with The Man; he offered Davis a solid but open ground for improvisation, as no guitarist had since John McLaughlin.

Scofield's always exuded such confidence. Flash isn't his style, but he stalks the stage much like Miles does, restless, with thick guitar lines flowing from his fingers. One ear on his bandmembers' efforts, he signals changes of intensity level with a glance. His aching, bent blue notes always touch one's nerves and seldom seem self-consciously predetermined. Scofield believes even his young listeners detect insincere chuck.

"The people we play to aren't all jazz aficionados. They're on the border, but they seem to be going for it. Heavy-metal kids who want to take the next step. Young musicians who want to hear guys play good, hear something happening," he says. "And they can tell. They've been in the garage, jamming, and they know when it's happening and when it's not."

The lead lines Scofield unleashes, the sturdy song structures he composes, and the backbeat energy Dennis Chambers propounds result in something purists might not consider jazz at all. The guitarist indulges such dispare.

"There's not one bar of traditional 4/4 on *Lead Jazz*," he admits, "it's all electric, and mostly funk-oriented. But I meet people in the hinterlands who've never heard Charlie Parker, who think my music is jazz. They think *any* instrumental music with guys taking solos is jazz. And I kind of go for that. I'm aware of the jazz tradition, very much so, but I like the fact that to their ears there's jazz—which is guys blowing, and there's classical music—which is written out, and you can sort of tell it's not improvised. And then there's pop-rock, everything else that has words."

"This Jamaican cabdriver was telling me he was in Kingston when the first reggae bands started. He says, 'Man, did you know the first reggae bands were jazz?' I don't know anything about reggae, and I wondered, 'What does this guy mean by jazz?' He meant players blowing over a groove. He was talking about the Skatalites—I heard them, eventually, and that's what it was. They were Parker nuts playing over a reggae groove. And that's sort of what our music is. Only there's another vernacular that's come about from guys who've been influenced by jazz, who've been deeply into learning standards, and changes, and phrasing, but have also always played in other kinds of bands."

WHILE SCOTFIELD'S incisive harmonic wit reflects the polish of Berklee School of Music studies, his basic maternal derives from the soulful 60s hits on Memphis's Stax and the independent New Orleans labels, on Chicago's Chess, and Motown, and Atlantic's black sessions.

"Rhythm 'n' blues is what we're talking about," he says. "There's always been crossover there. Horace Silver, Cannonball Adderley... look at late-40s and early-50s R&B records, and they have Connie Kay on drums. What more of a jazz drummer could there be? Johnny Griffin playing tenor solos. R&B was *always* jazz. There's some difference, sure, but it was always *like* the same thing."

Scofield maintains, "If I had to play all night on rock beats number one, two and three, I'd get bored. I want elasticity. What I learned playing with Miles is that you can swing more on certain rhythms. What Zawinul writes always has swinging-type bass lines, and you can express yourself over that. There's more shuffle to it than to straight-ahead rock-type stuff."

Knowing what he likes, concerts and club dates are the crucial tests of his compositions. "Only about a third of the material I've written seems to hold up as I want to play it alive. And it takes me a long time to figure out what's going to work. The obvious stuff gets boring. Stuff I think won't work because it's too tight, I find a different way to arrange."

Of course, financial imperatives also inform his labours. "You have to make a record every year just to stay in business, so I'm always thinking, 'What the hell am I gonna do next?' There's the eclectic point of view—you know, got to Bali, play gamelan

music, put it in your stuff. That can be pretty jive, you know? But you don't want to make the same record over and over. Even looking at bebop: except for Bird with strings, Parker was always making the same record. Of course, he was a great genius, and it's not boring – I love to listen to them all. But idiomatically, he was always working in the same context."

The context in which Scofield barnstorms has its own fatal flaws. "The fusion cutse," he calls it. "What I hate about fusion music is the gymnastics – just as Maynard Ferguson is not my favourite trumpet player in jazz. We're often playing to audiences who want to see us play fast and loud and don't know shit."

"Excuse me, audience, but there *are* a lot of people like this. And I have to watch myself. Because when you're playing, and it feels like you want to play fast, sometimes you're saying, 'I can get those kids at that table to be on their feet jumping up and down if I go nuts. Let's nail 'em!' And that's a real cheap thrill." Scofield half-seriously credits his producer and former bassist Steve Swallow with keeping him from slipping over into bad taste.

"These kids are just waiting for that. They say, 'We heard Chick's Elektrik Band, and they blew us away!' Or, 'We just heard Al Dimeola, and it was wicked awesome, man!' They identify with our band. I'm a guitarist, coming out of blues. Which is where Eddie Van Halen and those rock 'n' roll guys are coming out of, too, whether they know it or not. I've never been that good at doing fast stuff – luckily, it doesn't come easy to me. Now, Dennis is a chops phenomenon. On his solos, he destroys the drums. But he also has inbred musicianship. So it's exciting, and it's not so calculated."

Scofield sharpens his point. "You can't call definite goods and bads – there are some show-off guitar players I really like, and some subtle guitar players I really *don't* like. But think of the bar scene in *Round Midnight*. Those people are there to hear poetry in the broadest sense. We're not playing for that audience. But I think the bulk of the people who come to hear us is looking for something else, too."

"We're an alternative to other kinds of fusion. Our idiom is an open field. If I were to play bebop guitar, well, it's pretty crowded in there, not to mention the history that's gone down. But there aren't so many bands that use the elements my band uses. And people really want to hear us, which is nice."

"I've got to say, I've chosen this. I'd be lying if I said financial responsibilities don't move me, because if I'm going to make my money playing music, I have to have people come to the gig. But I'm really trying to stay pure and do what I want. I'll find things I want to do that appeal to the audience, too. But I always pick stuff I like, especially on the gig."

"See, it's easy to make a record you can't listen to again – which I haven't done. But on the gig, when I've driven all day

and the only good thing about my day is playing that gig, I can't get up there and do something I don't like."

THE ROAD is wearying, though when he tours beyond the States he's curious enough to try to seek out the local scene.

"I always thought of England as the enclave of trad, like they didn't pay any attention to anything after that. I was surprised how hip it is. I've known about the free improvisers like Derek Bailey, but I figured those guys didn't get to do anything. There is something going on for them. And dates for my band. And young groups. We played opposite Loose Tubes at a festival, they were completely different, looking like pop guys but playing like jazz guys. There's a strange thing I don't understand of people in Boy George outfits dancing to Jimmy McGriff and old Jackie McLean Blue Note records in discos."

"There's usually some weirdo in the corner dancing when we play," Scofield acknowledges, "but it's never been that they clear the tables and everybody dances, which I'd enjoy. It's funny, we played a gig once in Germany opposite Dave Holland's band. And Germany has a fantastic audience for the quote unquote avant garde. I forget where this festival was, but it was summer, and there were a lot of German hippies with long hair, the guys taking their shirts off, the women in flowered dresses. Dave's band was on when we arrived, and these guys didn't play anything in 4/4. Everything was either in odd time, or implied. Smitty Smith was drumming and he was beautiful: the band was state of the art, they were burning, you can't get any better than that. Half the audience was doing this interpretive dancing. Then we got up, it's backbeat city, and nobody danced! They liked us, too, but *Dave's* music got them up."

Does the long haul seem longer, since he's been in charge?

"Yeah. It was fun to be in Miles's band, because there was the band, and the star. We could talk about Miles behind his back, complain, we got shuffled from place to place – but we didn't have any part in the decision-making process regarding the music. I like having a band and being ultimately responsible for what goes down. That makes it worthwhile, but it's not as much fun. It's more work."

"I don't know how much longer I can do it. But I don't see myself doing anything else. A few years ago I used to think maybe I could be a studio musician and grind out jingles, but you have to know the current sounds that are making pop hits, so you can play what's on that *other* chesseburger ad. You have to be into it completely, and I couldn't do that. Teaching is difficult – satisfying, but incredibly frustrating. Maybe I'll end up doing that, but I'm too selfish. I'd rather spend the time figuring out what *I'm* going to do. That leaves the road."

This is where we came in. Elektrik guitarist John Scofield, a devoted family man, is a hustling 80s road warrior. What else could he do?

h y m n s o f s p e e d a n d l i g h t

JOHN McLAUGHLIN,

STILL FRETTING AFTER

ALL THESE YEARS.

BY RICHARD COOK

JOHN McLAUGHLIN looks well. His skin shines, as if it's had a deep rub with oil of walnut, and with his small bright eyes and ironic smile he has the air of a prince in proud exile, waiting to be asked back.

McLaughlin has never really been away. Fifteen years ago he was the pivotal figure in the breaking of jazz-rock to a vast audience. That was an era of guitar heroes, and his peerless skill on a fretboard was enough to attract an audience that cared little for any jazz articulation. The ensuing time might have dulled his influence — "I don't have any record out, so I don't know why you're here!" — but the reverberations of that work continue to resound. In the late 80s, his classic Mahavishnu Orchestra LPs are finding their way into new collections of compact discs.

"Oh, I think it's always flattering that people find your previous work interesting for a number of years. Any artist has delusions of immortality. My personal view is that when it's finished, it's done. There's nothing you can do with it any more. What's important is today.

"I have my souvenirs, some very nice souvenirs, but I'm alive now. If I have a concert tonight, it's the most important concert in the world. If I get called back tomorrow, tonight will be my last concert. That's the most natural attitude I can have."

Even if he is called back, John will still have some new records

in the pipeline. He is back with CBS again, though now it's the Masterworks label that will release his albums. It stems from his guitar concerto, due to be released in the autumn, although there are also duo sessions with Jonas Hellborg and a set by his current trio already on tape.

Maybe it was inevitable that McLaughlin would one day turn to the concerto form. When asked originally to do the Rodrigo concerto with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, he demurred, but was persuaded to write his own piece, with Mike Gibbs doing the orchestration. We must wait to hear the LP to see if it's an advance on *Apocalypse*, the album that pitted Mahavishnu against the LSO and hardly the finest hour of either side. What does the new piece sound like?

"I think it's much better that you hear it! Impossible to say. I can say there's this influence, that one, jazz . . . it doesn't mean anything. What's interesting for me is that all the cadenzas are improvised. That's something they like very much in the classical world, because they've lost that way of working."

McLAUGHLIN'S WORKED in more contexts than most. It's difficult to imagine this beatific, serene Yorkshireman hammering out rhythm and blues on the same circuit that



spawned The Rolling Stones, a quarter century ago. But he was always curious about other corners. When his old chum Graham Bond got him interested in Eastern thinking and music, the kind of fusion that Ravi Shankar and John Mayer were investigating wasn't far away. And there was jazz, too: when McLaughlin made his first record under his own name in 1969, he played with John Surman and Tony Oxley and called the set *Extrapolation*. It has worn extraordinarily well (and Polydor should reissue it at once): brief, incisive tracks that sublimate

blues, hard bop and free playing into a hard, modern intensity that has scarcely dated at all.

Unlike, though, his music with Lifetime and Miles Davis, recorded around the turn of the decade. The guitarist's contribution to the electric Miles of that day was as wayward as everybody else's. Like most of the participants in *Bitches Brew*, *Live/Evil* and *Big Fun*, he gets out occasional sparks in the murky storm of sound. Next to, say, Steve Grossman on "Go Ahead John", he seems to lack any specific sense of purpose. But



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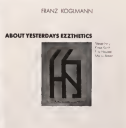
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McLaughlin's key method was already coming clear: his capacity to fuse, to celebrate other genres with a particular, trance-like exultation.

With both the Mahavishnu Orchestra and Shakti, his group with three Indian musicians, it felt less like a new music McLaughlin was playing, more a supercharged trip through long-established forms. The newness was the virtuosity itself; the fusion wasn't between forms, but between genre and expression. McLaughlin's incredibly fast fingers picked off notes and chords and hurled them out at speeds which were overpowering. It's tempting to wonder if he now finds he has any areas of technical prowess left to conquer.

"Oh! It's never-ending," he replies, in his curious mixture of accents. "Never-ending. I think that's part of music. You need means to articulate. Sometimes I bring everything into question, but that's a continuous process."

"I search constantly for new techniques, new forms. I still feel very inarticulate sometimes, musically, but it's often at those moments that I really feel in touch with myself. When I'm really learning, I'm discovering that the old techniques become obsolete. They have to be brought up to date."

Most musicians seem to spend their mature work in a pining away, a getting down to essentials.

"I think that's what I'm saying, but in different words. That's what I mean about coming up to date. Perception is to do with what you consider essential. My dream is to have the kind of technique where I only have to suggest things to the imagination of the listener, and have their imagination play the rest. This may be the highest art in improvisation. I'm working towards it. Slowly."

McLAUGHLIN'S STYLE is actually difficult to catch hold of. On a record such as *Inner World*, the last CBS album by the Mahavishnu clan, he sounds adrift in a welter of guitar-synthesizers, overlubbed parts and sheer bombast, yet even amid all the artificialities of tone and timbre, it sounds eerily like him. On acoustic guitar, in Shakti as much as in his rather demure contributions to Zakir Hussain's lovely ECM record *Making Music*, his chords and twanging single-note lines reveal not so much an individual personality as an exotic, brilliant synthesis.

His great moments have always been hymns of speed and light. "Sister Andrea" from the live record *Between Nothingness And Eternity* is one such: the blasting music becomes inward-looking, a vehicle where power and glory celebrate themselves. It's a very different direction to the kind of new urbanity purveyed by such current leaders as Scofield, Frisell and Abercrombie. Does he follow the work of such players?

"Sco I love. He's maybe my most favourite jazz guitarist playing today. Frisell, it's funny but I've never heard him. I heard a guy called Scott Henderson (in Joe Zawinul's band) who I was very impressed with."

"If there's a good guitar player then I want to hear him. It's my instrument. I should know if I want to send someone out to break his hands."

Laughter, although there might be a twinge of genuine

menace at the back of McLaughlin's quip. Talking to him, one sometimes detects an iron streak that is not quite the gladsome humility associated with men who've meditated a long time on old, self-sacrificial philosophies. In any event, electric guitarists hardly seem like competition to him: he hasn't picked up an electric guitar for two years.

"For the moment, my interest is in the acoustic guitar. I always played acoustic, even in the most electric bands. It was always the guitar I took to hotels and on to the buses. It was very important to me that I could continue the work on acoustic guitar, from a technical point of view. Acoustic is very demanding. It's the same with keyboards - acoustic pianos you have to fight, dominate, or they'll dominate you."

"But nothing will replace acoustic or electric guitars. No electronic instrument can. You can sample it, but you can't get the feeling, or the sound. You can't imitate the player, or the whole physical process of playing, the battle between man or woman and the instrument."

SINCE DISSOLVING Shakti in 1978, McLaughlin has seemed like a player in search of a context. His few records since then have been a mixture of formats, nothing very striking in terms of direction. Does the absence of the huge audience he had for Mahavishnu affect what he does?

"It's the same," he says, a picture of calm and reason. "If you have an audience, whether it's ten or ten thousand, it's still an audience. If you have one person listening, that's just as important. I think it's more relevant to the rock world, where rock stars are subject to the adulation which instrumentalists are rarely subject to. The success of Mahavishnu was something even I didn't understand. But I don't want to abandon the audience and go and live in some ivory tower. Like any artist, I'd love to be adored by everyone in the world. It's that my way in life is to look for new forms and new ways."

That way, at present, is to spend most of his time composing at home, sometimes touring, or instructing his solitary pupil. It's a pity he hasn't shown up more often among the technocrats of today. His cameo shots on Miles Davis's *You're Under Arrest* seemed almost nostalgic. John has a nice story about the making of *Jack Johnson*.

"That's Miles's most favourite record. We were in the studio, Herbie Hancock, Michael Henderson, Billy Cobham and me, and Miles was talking with Teo Macero in the control room for a long time. I got a little bored and I started to play this shuffle, a kind of boogie in E with some funny chords. The others picked it up and locked in. The next thing, the door opened, and Miles runs in with his trumpet and we played for about 20 minutes. It was a large part of that record. It came out of nowhere."

How would he approach such a brief now, for an electric record?

"Electric guitar? If the great Larry Young were alive, I'd have him with Elvin Jones. *Unty*, that LP with Joe Henderson and Woody Shaw, the feeling there is great. I'd just go in with some heads, a few tunes. Maybe I'll get to do it one day."

OK by me.

THE JAZZ AGE

That's The Blues, Old Man

THE GREAT DAYS OF JOHNNY HODGES

BY JACK COOKE

THE FIRST time I saw Johnny Hodges with the Ellington band in the early 1960s. By that time he was long into being a "legend". The impression I got tended to confirm the status, he didn't move about a lot, and when he played he seemed to disappear behind his saxophone, the only remaining aspect of the man himself being a pair of wide-open eyes (Ellington always alleged he was "counting the house" — working out how much the band had made on the gig and relating that to his wages). It seemed a physical demonstration that the man himself was closed to the public; the musician and the music only were on display.

No doubt there's a definitive biography somewhere, though if there is I haven't seen it or read it. Nor do I feel I need to, I'm content that whoever he was, all that exists now is music, and that will live for as long as there's anyone around to listen to it. There's an awful lot of it too: with Ellington his recordings run into the thousands, and this takes no account of the work under his own name or with other leaders. Few jazz musicians offer so much evidence for analysis, and with Hodges there is the added difficulty of separating him from his main employer while at the same time evaluating his contribution to the Ellingtonian totality.

Hodges joined Ellington's band in May 1928, shortly before his 21st birthday, following brief gigs with a number of less well-known outfits. He left around the end of 1950, returned in 1955 to stay another 15 years until his death in 1970, so this legacy covers more than 40 years' work. And while, over this long period, his playing comes to exemplify truly dominant qualities, his influence as a stylist remains more general than specific, set in terms of the "tricks of the trade" which he developed and which could be absorbed into a kind of jazz vernacular — technical points that others could pick up and use — his personal vision, which depended so much on the microscopic judgement of time and note, defied imitation and was purely his own creation.

That's not surprising. In the late 1920s the saxophone was still finding its place in jazz. It did not have the dominating qualities it has today, and a lot of musicians were finding their ways at a time when Armstrong's lyrical solo flights had opened up the boundaries of the music anyway. So within that area of opportunity and uncertainty, as the saxophone developed in jazz, there became easier acts to follow than that of Hodges.

With Ellington, Hodges joined a unit that had been, to that point, brass-dominated, by the voices of trumpeter Bubber Miley and Tricky Sam Nanton on trombone. His early solo contributions are perhaps less significant than his impact on the ensemble. Scores like "Hot And Bothered" or "Move Over" (both 1928) feature saxophone writing of an almost manic quality (they wouldn't be out of place in an Ornette solo) yet only a year later, in "Blues Of The Vagabond" (1929), a very different sound has emerged. With the section numbers increased to four, as Otto Hardwick returned to join Barney Bigard and Harry Carney alongside Hodges, the rich legato power, indicative of "things

to come" drifting up to and away from notes rather than frantically whacking them directly on the head, begins to be felt.

ELLINGTON'S BAND at this point signals consolidation within itself, the personnel that, given minimal fluctuations, was to last for a decade or more and proclaim itself as the "Famous Orchestra" was in place. Ellington the composer, in the corny old phrase, had found his "instrument". Some indication of the role of Hodges within this system, and the significance of how what he liked to do impacted upon Ellington's own work, may be encapsulated on "The Duke Steps Out" (1929) — a title of no mean importance in itself. Credited to Ellington, (Coote) Williams and Hodges, it's a complex item. The piano introduction includes a phrase that surfaced a quarter of a century later as "Band Call" (1954) and centrally it's built around a 32-bar structure which heavily features Williams and involves a clear separation of clamouring brass and slithering saxes. Yet, for Nanton's and Hodges' solos, twelve-bar blues-based sections are incorporated, and quite carefully and deliberately dovetailed in. Here is the first truly assured solo from Hodges within the Ellington band; lithe, elegant, technically superb, and though he still uses more notes than he would later they are placed in an apparently casual but quite inimitable pattern. There is no coincidence here, for Hodges was later to take the form to himself and produce a remarkable variety of improvisation within it.

Quite why that should be as hard to come by, for Hodges wasn't born and bred in "blues country" — unless you count the trip from his birthplace in Cambridge, Mass., to New York within that territory. Nevertheless his dedication to the blues is clear from his work, never more clearly indicated than in the records under his own name from the 1930s.

This series began in 1937 and accumulated over 40 titles on the Vocalion label between then and 1939; further items went into the Victor catalogue and continued throughout his later work. Probably no more than a quarter of the Vocalion tracks are blues-based, but that's a fair proportion and when the chance comes to hear them back-to-back (or side-by-side) they begin to represent something very substantial and offer some access to Hodges' fundamental view of music.

On several of them — "Jeep's Blues", "Empty Ballroom Blues" (both 1938), "Rene Parry Blues" (1939) Hodges plays soprano saxophone, and on this instrument his relationship to Sidney Bechet is clear. How deep it goes — for its importance as an extended range for his alto work is equally strong — is hard to decide. Bechet was earlier on the scene — starting off on record with Clarence Williams in 1923 — but was himself more New York than New Orleans. It is said that they played together (maybe when Hodges wasn't working with Duke and when Bechet wasn't running his tailoring shop with Tommy Ladner). It may be argued that by relating Bechet's style through soprano to alto Hodges transmuted Bechet into the mainstream of saxophone playing: on the other hand it could be said that only a technician of Hodges' standard

could borrow so freely from Bechet, and perhaps finally they remain two remote yet oddly accessible, interlocked giants, defying comparison with others.

However, whether on soprano or alto, the Vocalion tracks represent a classic feast. Tempos range from the medium-slow "Good Gal Blues" (1939) to medium – "Krum Elbow Blues" (1938) – to the medium-fast "Empty Ballroom Blues" (1938), but they're never very fast or very slow. The harmonic structure is fixed, the arrangements never strive for novelty over logic, and solos are brief. Yet these seemingly deliberately enclosed structures sing with invention and detail, melody just pours out of them, and the sheer appetite for the music seems endless. Within this conventional format Hodges sits back and takes his fastidiously considered time: every note is carefully placed towards overall effect and formal grace, yet with a view almost to deflecting the listener's attention away from it, attempting to convince that nothing very special's going on here.

When this series moves away from the twelve-bar form it generally doesn't go far; simply shifts to an equally comfortable popular-song format, then proceeds to demonstrate the same dazzling perfection with the same offhand attitude. Hear if you can "Dancing In The Stars" (1938) and – as proof, if needed, that Hodges could reproduce this form outside the Ellington-based Vocalion setting – "You're My Ideal" (1938, under Lionel Hampton's leadership).

THE TURN of a decade can frequently trigger a search for the importance of an artist's work. Ellington as the 1940s opened has been done to death. It has to be said there is some justification: the Victor recording contract which began then was certainly symbolic of major changes, though most of the important acquisitions to the band – Jimmy Blanton, Ben Webster and, most importantly, Billy Strayhorn – had actually arrived during 1939. The severing of Ellington's managerial association with Irving Mills and the "new deal" with William Morris, an event of arguably equal importance for Ellington's music, occurred in 1939 also. Nevertheless the flood of inspired material on Victor (and how much of that was written earlier and held pending in the contractual basket is hard to say) did shout aloud the revitalisation and ambition within Ellington's organisation.

It also reflected the impact of the "name band" on the Famous



Orchestra and held implications for Hodges. The instrumentalist as leader, frontman as instrumental "star" rather than – in Henry "Red" Allen's phrase – "batoneer", which began with Goodman and had by this time proliferated to Artie Shaw, Tommy Dorsey, Harry James and Gene Krupa among others, had led to the heavy featuring of such musicians on their band's records, and there were already instances of such people occupying the whole of what was then presently available recording time (of three minutes, give or take a second or two). There was also evidence of them making good money . . .

... for they filled the dance-halls. For some time Ellington's "jungle sound", those brass-dominated experiments with tone-colour, which maybe had been oriented towards Kentucky Club and Cotton Club floor-shows, had been fading and music for dancing (as opposed to music for dance) had become the dominant mode of expression. In 1940 the committed showcasing of individual band members along "name-band" lines began, for Ellington had any number of people who could be so featured, and rapidly they were "Concerto For Cootie" (1940) and Ray Nance's comprehensive outing on "Take The 'A' Train" (1941) were indicative of this process. Ironically Ellington could claim to have started the whole thing off with Bigard's feature "Clarinet Lament" in 1936.

In Hodges' case such featuring inaugurated a major stylistic perception. Although "Warm Valley" (1940) is not exclusively a Hodges vehicle – there is also a notable contribution from Rex Stewart and a lengthy section exploiting the values of the increased saxophone line-up – it does find Hodges luxuriating through the rich, slow-tempo theme, yet delighting in an instrumental control so tight that it never descends into sentimentality. This potentiality had been hanging around, to an extent unused, since "I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart" (1938, big- and small-band versions). This tension between the ascetic and the voluptuous had maybe awaited Strayhorn's ear, but there can be little doubt that it required – and got – Hodges' full acquiescence, for its first perfect example, written by Strayhorn, "Day Dream" (late 1940) came from one of Hodges' own spin-off sessions with a small group of Ellington regulars.

This and the following session (from July 1941) remain among the richest and most fascinating of all Hodges' work. There's the



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THE JAZZ AGE

unrestrained virtuosity of "Good Queen Bless", the rapturous yet worryingly beady-eyed "Day Dream", and the glorious farewell to the soprano saxophone of "That's The Blues, Old Man" from the first session. One of the reasons Hodges gave up the instrument may be gleaned from his upper-register experiments on "Passion Flower", another rich item from the second session. By now he could do everything he wanted to do on the one instrument. There's also, maybe prophetically, the theme that later surfaced as a powerfully urgent big-band item called "Time's A-Wasting" (before it reverted to its first inclination) receiving here a restrained, decidedly melancholy performance: "Thing's Ain't What They Used To Be".

Well, they were and they weren't. By 1944 Hodges' rhapsodic forays had been presented at Carnegie Hall within the Ellington band, and later that year recorded on "Come Sunday" from the "Black, Brown And Beige" suite (though Hodges had beaten Duke to the punch by six years, appearing with Goodman's band in 1938 – and simply doing his twelve-bar thing – on "Blue Reverie"). The dance-hall as a means of economic stability had already begun to falter and the possibilities of the concert-stage beckoned Ellington. Within the beginnings of this transition Hodges' soaring alto as a vehicle for intimate dancing (check out the 1940 Crystal Ballroom version of "Warm Valley") became transmuted by what seems almost a philosophic shift into the intense, hotly spicily "Sultry Sunset" of Carnegie 1946 or "Magenta Haze" from the same year's Muscraft sessions. These are wholly stunning performances, though they mark a further thickening of the technical defenses through which Hodges projected his personal immediacy.

Between times there remained the casually perfect, off-the-cuff moments that recalled earlier days. "Never No Lament" (1940) is a fine example, while the V-Disc "In The Shade Of The Old Apple Tree" (1945) stands out as a classic.

IN 1950 Hodges left Ellington to embark on a period as an independent leader. There seemed to be a market for what were then referred to as "jump" bands. Earl Bostic made a sizeable hit at the juke-box with Ellington's "Flamingo"; subsequently Al Sears' "Castle Rock" did well. It was during this period that the young John Coltrane worked in the band and developed his profound admiration for the leader's abilities as a saxophonist. But although the band seemed to work well enough, by 1955 Hodges was back with his old boss. There is a theory that Ellington's men were tempted into leadership by their star billing, then found the world colder and harder once they'd left. However that may be, a number of them tried it and returned, Hodges among them.

By 1955, however, that return was as something of a monument to himself within a band that had begun to become its own museum. To say such a thing seems harsh, but it did often seem from then on as though such legends as Cootie Williams, Ray Nance, Lawrence Brown, Harry Carney and Hodges, Jimmy Hamilton and Cat Anderson were on "permanent display", featured individually on numbers or again individually on the suites that Ellington and Strayhorn concocted. Like

classic cars, they were taken out and given a run, then returned to rest and safety.

Nevertheless there were occasional autumnal flourishes. Some of these were re-worked, like the 1957 Newport Festival version of the 1938 "Jeep's Blues", but some of the best, pitching Hodges back into the small-band format he dealt with so well, reflected the growing "mainstream revival" of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The dangers of that kind of fundamentalism, incorporating a call for the rejection of modernism and the search for spiritual comfort within an unexamined past, are probably clearer now than then. Not everyone avoided the pitfalls – the theoretical proponents of the mode indeed set out to dig them – but often the musicians did, and it has to be said that the format worked brilliantly well for Hodges. His sense of instrumental equilibrium, his ability to invent endlessly within a restricted area and evident pride in being able to do so suited the scenario well. "Just A Memory" (1958) with Ben Webster, Roy Eldridge and Strayhorn, has to be accepted as a classic, while most redolent of all "Cherry" (1959) under Strayhorn's leadership, catches for a few moments the pure flow of the 1930s Vocalists, a freehand delicacy strong as steel, simultaneously purposeful and utterly informal.

Rather sadly, his last recordings (1970) show signs of waning power. They're a mish-mash of Oliver Nelson scores of some Ellington and Hodges classics, with some Leon Thomas vocals thrown in here and there for good measure. But the rather lumpy versions of "Empty Ballroom Blues" or "Rockin' In Rhythm" aren't really the problem – what is difficult to take is Hodges trying to play within himself. For though his best work always occurs within a conventional framework, at his best it's always on the basis that "if you got it, flaunt it" – here that microscopic judgement, though present, serves to disguise notes that he seems unable to make or sustain. But then, less than a month later, he was dead from the last of a series of heart attacks.

There won't be anybody like him again, but then there wasn't ever, anyway.

RECORD GUIDE

Out of the thousands of tracks, this has to be merely indicative. The Hodges 1940 and '41 sessions are available within the RCA "Jazz Tribune" series (double albums). Get these if you can. The rest of Ellington's Victor output is similarly available. The best of the early 1940s sessions are collected into a boxed set on the resurrected Bluebird label. This is not just a feast of Hodges, but some of the greatest music ever recorded. Early Ellington is presently a minefield that I don't propose to enter. The Hodges Vocalists are not presently available as far as I know. With luck, somebody will tell me differently. The V-discs have appeared on strange Italian labels mainly and the Crystal Ballroom set is presently on one of these. The Muscrafts are similarly available though they've been out on many other obscure labels. Hodges from 1950 on made a lot of records for Norman Granz. The late Strayhorn album is out on Affinity, the last session on RCA's JazzLine. I record my sincere thanks to John Kendall for the loan of some rare items.

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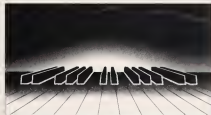
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DEREK BAILEY/CYRO BAPTISTA
CYRO

(Incus CD 01)

Recorded: NYC, October 1982

*You Jog; Quanta Tempo, Polvo, Rio Bravo, Jaga You,**Que Hora, Tuto, Battale*
Derek Bailey (g), Cyro Baptista (perc.)DEREK BAILEY/HAN BENNINK
HAN

(Incus CD 02)

Recorded: 15-22 March 1986, Essex University,
Colchester, The Carmarthen, Leeds, Soho Poly
Theatre and Bethnal Green Music Library, London
Melancholy Babes, pp. 1 & 2

Derek Bailey (g); Han Bennink (perc., etc.)

IT WASN'T hooligans or the police dogs or the lack of a drink that started to keep me away from the football of a Saturday afternoon. What it was initially – this is two years ago, the spring of 1986 – was a season of knock-out improvisation duets organised by Derek Bailey at the Bethnal Green Music Library. Last this seems a priggish alternative to soccer, let it be said that in those days I had tended to go and watch the sporting equivalent of New Age music (ie Arsenal) and that at least one of Mr Bailey's opposite numbers was generating a level of aggression that would have done Millwall credit.

Han Bennink is an extraordinary figure, one of a tiny elite for whom music is a kind of inescapable Midas reflex (I've heard the same thing said about Monk and Don Cherry). Even the rawest of his gestures seem to be suffused with imagination. *Han* – edited from performances at Bethnal Green, the Soho Poly, Leeds and the University of Essex – launches into Shartrock/Shannon Jackson territory with a couple of shots on goal in the first five minutes.

Even on chi-chi technology – Incus's first venture into the wonderful world of CD – there's an 'ave we started yet' quality to some of the sections, though no one by now surely questions that noisy ambiances and ill-defined boundaries are part of the piece. "Melancholy Babes" even includes a verbal excursion on the purchase of records; back catalogue in the foyer, ladies and gents.

That said, there's nothing compromisingly "commercial" in the music, the packaging is a little envelope of irony. Bennink has remarkable chops, even in the most conventional sense. He shares with Eddie Prevost an ability to keep or imply time even

when the playing is at its least fettered. In ergonomic terms, there are episodes that rival anything recently committed to disc by the International Harmolodic Brotherhood.

Richard Cook mentioned in his live review of the Bethnal Green gig how Derek Bailey always seems to play louder when in Han's forceful company (J.R. Montrose used to amp up his sax for his duets with the Dutchman). There's certainly plenty of occasion here for a swell pedal and, as the piece develops, a hard resonance (not without unexpected bluesy overtones) pitched against the less reverberative percussion. For additional colour, there's some soprano sax and a flurry of piano. Every man his own orchestra.

Louder, yes, but the intro to part two also underlines the meditative side both men

HAN



espouse equally often. The eruption isn't long delayed but there is a lot more *space* here. That is the essential component in Bailey's New York-recorded duets with Brazilian percussionist Cyro Baptista, eight shorter pieces in which the two personalities blend more comfortably but also with a slightly cosmetic lack of urgency. I'm determinedly a fan of Bailey's electric work over his acoustic playing (there's a second, unintended distinction there) but on Cyro he's superbly fluent and coaxes a beautiful ringing tone even without his pickups and pedals. How you adjust to Mr Bailey after working with Astrud Gilberto and Ruben Blades I don't know but Baptista manages the transition and brings along much of the rhythmic essence of contemporary Latin musics. In this company, Bailey plays not more loudly but unquestionably more rhythmically.

It's less relevant perhaps to one album of pieces and one of rather Heath Robinson edits but a sterling advantage of CD (leaving aside issues of sound-quality) is the possibility of listening to the entire "Leusgrad" *Symphony* without moving the arm, or of releasing longer improvisation pieces without a break or edit. At more than 45 minutes each way, soccer's out the window.

BRIAN MORTON

HANS REICHEL
THE DAWN OF DACHSMAN
(FMP 1140)

Recorded: Berlin, May 1987

*Waiting, The Dawn Of Dachsmen, Playing The Table
Man, An Old Friend Passes By, Thinking, Dachsmen
In Berlin, Dachsmen Meets The Blues, Watching The
Shades, Yawn Show Up, Return Of The Kandler Show,
Forgotten, An Old Friend Passes By Again*
Reichel (g, dachaphon)

THE LAST 1980s have seen the guitar grow, finally, into a mature innovative force. It might have happened earlier if more people had heard the records that Hans Reichel has been making since the early 1970s.

With his workshop of home-made guitars and entirely individual technique, Reichel creates music which can be packed with wrenching, wounded sounds yet is still tempered by a lyrical spirit. He continues to say "all numbers taped as played" on the sleeve, a proud claim in an age where you can get machines to do all the tricky bits for you. This time Hans performs on guitar and "dachaphon", whatever that is. The instruments muster the resonance of electric 12-strings and the rusted charm of others, and Reichel plays them with the kind of aged reverence one associates with temple bells.

A rock feel creeps in very occasionally, as on "An Old Friend Passes By Again", which somebody will probably call *legato* blues for post-post-modernists; mostly, it sounds only like Reichel music. He likes to play a phrase and let the last measure fade away, as if listening back to it. Detuning, hammer-on, octave playing, swells, underwater scratchings, everything is in here: the sort of effects that Jordan, Frisell and Shartrock need a dozen pedals for, Reichel conjures out of his fingers alone. After a long silence, it's good to welcome him back. Those of us who are concerned over *The Death Of The Rare Bird Yawn* will be pleased to note a track called

"Ymir Shows Up"; clearly, the demise was greatly exaggerated.

RICHARD COOK

JOHN SCOTFIELD

PICK HITS

(Gramavision 18 8805-1)

Recorded: Tokyo, 7 October 1987

Picks And Pans, Pick Hits, Heaven Hall, Protocol; Blue Matter, Thanks Again.

John Scofield (g), Robert Aries (kp), Gary Grainger (b), Dennis Chambers (d)

LOUD JAZZ

(Gramavision 18 8801-1)

Recorded: New York, December 1987

Tell You What, Don't Be Home, Signatures Of Venus, Dirty Race, Warash, Loud Jazz, You Love, Did It, Spj Vj Spj

John Scofield (g), Robert Aries, George Duke (ky), Gary Grainger (b), Dennis Chambers (d), Don Alias (perc)

TWO RECENT events in the rise and rise of John Scofield. Earlier of the two, by a few weeks, though not earlier in the release numbers, is the live set from Tokyo. Scofield's quartet has been around for over two years now and in 1986 did the business at Bracknell, though only bassist Grainger remains from Scofield's associates of the time. New drummer Chambers gets a much harder, non-resonant sound than Ricky Sebastian did then, while Aries on keyboards fills out what spaces are left in what is now more than ever busy, active music, but doesn't get much solo time. The result is tighter, but not necessarily more attractive. Regular items like "Protocol" or "Thanks Again" pursue familiar shapes with amended detail, and the sheer weight of this detail tempers you to concentrate on it, maybe to ignore the overall effect. This is of a band being very good at what it does, but in a rather idly technocratic way. There's no doubting its proficiency, but it sounds convinced without necessarily being convincing. A bit like the old Brubeck quartet in fact.

Still, maybe this was show-off night for the loyal punters at the Hitomi Memorial Hall. Scofield's sleeve-note reckons the audiences in Japan are somewhat more sophisticated than elsewhere. So there.

The studio set slightly eases off the determined virtuosity, thickens out the band with two keyboards for most of the tracks – and gives Supersax George Duke nearly all the solos: bad luck again Robert Aries, can't win

em all, eh? There's less concentration on Scofield as a soloist, and therefore added perspective, though some of Duke's narcotopic stuff makes you think the Tokyo album might be better than you realised; Scofield can be over-tricky and a bit boring with it sometimes, but he's never merely tedious.

When Duke's not around and it's possible to get away from the rather portentous "grand encounter" atmosphere there's a very pretty "True Love" and an engaging "Signature Of Venus". On "Did It" there's even a trace of the rather hectic *foo* that Scofield's playing often used to be.

So really, though there's probably remarkable efforts and technical prowess gone into these albums, it's all a bit like the guy on



the telly who goes to immense lengths to deliver the box of chocs you could have bought on your way home

JACK COOKE

PETER MAXWELL DAVIES

MISS DONNITHORNE'S MAGGOT/
EIGHT SONGS FOR A MAD KING
(Unicorn-Kanchana DKP CD 9052)

Recorded: (1) London, 24 May 1981, (2) 1, 2

October 1970

Mary Thomas (mezzo-soprano), Julius Eastman (baritone), Fires Of London (1981) Philippa Davies (fl), David Campbell (clt), Rosemary Furness (vln), Jonathan Williams (cdo), Stephen Pralin (p), Gregory Knowles (perc), (1970) Judith Pearce (fl), Alan Hacker (clt), Jennifer Ward Clarke (cln), Stephen Pralin (p, hps), Barry Quinn (perc)

In 1967 Peter Maxwell Davies and Harrison Birtwistle formed The Pierrot Players. The instrumentation was that required for

Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, arguably the most influential piece of non-operatic music theatre of the century. With those resources, both men began to explore an extreme – even violent – emotionalism in music, using elements of dramatic action and staging.

Perhaps the most substantial outcome of the experiment was Birtwistle's first full-length opera, the savage *Punch and Judy* (1968). Davies, though, stayed closer to the original Schoenbergian formula; in 1969 The Pierrot Players disbanded and were immediately reconstituted as The Fires Of London who play under Davies's direction and have most consistently been his interpreters.

Four music-theatre pieces stand out (and should be compared with Birtwistle's *Mosses*): *Miss Donnithorne's Maggot* (from 1974) and *The Medium* (1981), both for soprano and group; *Eight Songs For A Mad King* (1969) for male reciter and instruments; and the *Violin Inter* (also 1969) for cello, group and dancer, the last working an extraordinary juxtaposition of the Stations of the Cross with a book of 17th-century anatomical illustrations, brutally flayed and stripped.

The Fires' version of *Eight Songs For A Mad King* has been used previously on record. The text, by Australian novelist Randolph Stow (also responsible for *Miss Donnithorne*), refers to a miniature mechanical organ with a repertoire of eight melodies owned by George III in his final porphyritic madness and which he used to teach his pet bullfinches to sing. In each of the songs the king is paired with a player, flute, cello, violin, clarinet. At the climax, he reaches into the violinist's cage [sic], grabs the instrument and smashes it. It's a remarkable, painful piece but more of its interest lies in the action and text than is the case with *Miss Donnithorne's Maggot* – *Her Dump, Her Rant, Her Red*, to give the later work its full title.

Remarkably, this is its premiere recording. Over nearly 15 years Mary Thomas has refined the role (and her own remarkable vocal technique) to the highest pitch. Miss Donnithorne was the haunted original of Dickens's Miss Havisham, a demented jilt obsessed with her sailor lover. Anguish transforms her wedding cake into a complex subconscious symbol, both a lighthouse and a phallus, and a ghostly woman. The four "songs" are interspersed with recitatives in a style that recalls Berio and Carli Berberian rather than Schoenberg's *Sprechstimme*. Much of

the dance material is Elizabethan but again there are echoes of Davies's intriguing obsession with the forró (which also turns up in the "Country Dance" of *Eight Songs*) and of his ability as a writer of pastiche and parody. George's monologues, delivered with harrowing intensity by Julius Eastman, contain much the kind of burchery of the *Messiah* which Handel had to suffer at the court of the historical George.

Not comfortable music, but unavoidably important and, with patience, absolutely compelling.

BRIAN MORTON

SONNY ROLLINS DANCING IN THE DARK (Milestone M-9155)

Recorded: Berkeley, 15–25 September 1967

Just Once; OTYOG; *Prologue*, *Duke Of Love*, *Dancing In The Dark*, *I'll String Along With You*, *Allison*
Sonny Rollins (ts), Clifton Anderson (trb), Mark Soskin (kb), Jerome Harris (el b), Marvin "Smitty" Smith (d).

ROLLINS' FIRST studio recording in four years, *Dancing In The Dark* is a warm, likeable record. Rollins can still play tenor saxophone notes that seem to melt in their own sweetness, his distinctive tone and phrasing are intact, and the solo on the title track evinces the organisational flair and intelligence that marks Rollins as great.

Produced by Rollins himself (with his wife Lucille) the sound is resolutely cushioned throughout. Used in this way, electricity makes the sounds round and comfortable, lacking either the edge of acoustic ambience or the shock of electro distortion. Jerome Harris is proficient on bass, but propulsion is lost in keeping to a "nice" bass sound (to make an electric bass speak you need to get nasty). Clifton Anderson may be a skilled trombonist but his role is to add colour – his few solos cause no ripples.

Of course there have been good Rollins records before with studly rhythm sections – you wait for the acappella virtuosities and concentrate on the titan tenor, the rest a pattering jazz-rock blur. Here, though, Rollins has Marvin "Smitty" Smith (a top-notch drummer – hear him on David Murray's *Children*), there is no welter of congas or bagpipes to put up with and you hope for something more dynamic. Nevertheless, there is little happening rhythmically.

Rollins' relation to Caribbean rhythms has always been tendentious, if not downright superficial – though a lilting, quirky beat suits his tendency towards baroque extravagance rather than pared-down drive. Here "I'll String Along With You" is done reggae, and you can hear the musicians' discomfort – Mark Soskin cannot manage the required off-beat "chink" on the keyboards at all. As with jazz bossa nova, there is sense of patronage in this kind of tourism. Frequently drawn to tripe themes by what is supposedly a "sense of humour", Rollins mars his record with his choice of tunes. James Ingram's soul ballad "Just Once" sounds like a twee hymn, and the Scottish folk of "OTYOG" irritates.

The record is saved by Rollins' big tone and imagination. It is not Rollins' failure to play

work done and in progress. The discontinuity of his releases in the 80s has tended to blow away the close impression made by his records of the 70s.

The recent *Flow Of Things* group session wasn't much good; nor, I'm afraid, is this solo recital. It's more like a postscript to the great discoveries of *Nonesuch* than a proper continuation. The long soprano excursion on "Circle 3" investigates cyclic patterns of playing with little of the depth that Evan Parker brings to similar terrain – if Mitchell's timbre seems more "emotional" than Parker's or Braxton's, it also sounds inappropriately sentimental at times. The same flaw afflicts the bass sax piece "Dance Two", where the galumphing lines take on a kind of *Tubby The Tuba* pathos. His sequel to the macroronal "S 11 Examples" is much harsher than the prototype, working through spirals and harmonics, but the extra energy leaves no special impression.

In the circumstances, it's hardly surprising that the two remaining tracks – brief moments for alto – turn out best. "Cards" especially synthesises sound, space and form with much of Mitchell's finest resource.

RICHARD COOK



with musicians of "comparable stature" that is the problem (in other contexts Smith is wonderful) but the lack of space for genuine risk and dialogue in the arrangements – we're being strilled with pleasantness: nice at first but claustrophobia starts to set in.

BEN WATSON

ROScoe MITCHELL LIVE AT THE MUHLE HUNZIKERN (Cecma 1008)

Recorded: Rubigen, Switzerland, 14 September 1986

Circle 3–1, *Cards* for Alto-2; *Dance Two-1*, *Variations On S 11*, *Examples-2*, *Exiles-2*
Mitchell (ts-1, ss-2, bss-3)

THE ERRATIC appearances of Roscoe Mitchell's recent albums has been annoying. Here was a musician whose recorded work seemed, for once, to act as a very specific documentation of

BILLIE HOLIDAY THE LEGENDARY MASTERS (Recording Arts Reference Edition RARELP 01/03)

Recorded: 3 LPs, 67 tracks, 1935–58

RARE AND UNISSUED RECORDINGS FROM THE GOLDEN YEARS (Queen Disc Q-064/8)

Recorded: 1 LPs, plus 15rpm single, 60 tracks, 1935–52

IN AN article in Avron Levine White's anthology *Lost In Manhattan* (Cambridge University Press), Simon Frith, using a distinction in film theory between authors and *acteurs en scène*, calls Billie Holiday "the greatest *actress* Tin Pan Alley pop had." Meanwhile, John White's recent biography *Billie Holiday* quotes Benny Green, who refers to Billie's "purity" and goes on, "For a woman to sing for nearly 30 years without once bowing to the demands of the world of popular music... sounds nearly impossible when we remember that most of her material was borrowed from that very world."

Without quite disagreeing with each other,

Green and Frith place different emphases. For Green, Billie transcends what she sings, by implication, her artistry is superior to the banality of what she applied it to. In Frith's terms, this all but makes her an *auteur* (*autiste*). But for Frith, the relationship between what Billie sang and the way she sang it is crucial.

I think Frith has it right, many of the Tin Pan Alley songs Lady Day recorded had a real emotional content, derived from both words and music. The singer's skill was in pointing up that content, not undermining it. I'd even suggest that her weakness was a tendency to *obliterate* the material by overly stylised glides, slurs and elisions.

This suits a school of criticism which sees style as a triumph over content. As long as we hear the soloist doing something witty or ironic with a song we all agree is trite, it doesn't matter what the song is; jazz's credentials as art, not pop, are established. But, as these sets show, it's not easy to separate performance from what is performed. Holiday is at her best when drawing out the sense, subtly underlining the form of what she's singing.

These records show that much good material has been neglected in the copious reissue programmes – although not perhaps as neglected as the two boxes imply with their liberal use of "rare" and "unissued". Nearly every track earns its reissue, even if some incomplete performances on Queen Disc make uncomfortable listening, as do some of the more mannered, mostly later tracks on Recording Arts.

There's a lot of overlap: 21 tracks are duplicated, not to mention some others where different takes are used – Recording Arts uses take one of Billie's 1941 recording of "God Bless The Child", Queen Disc uses takes two and three, the latter incomplete. In fact, Billie didn't vary her performance that much from take to take.

The Queen Disc set runs from 1935–42, the Brunswick/Vocalion era, Recording Arts covers the same period in less depth, and also includes live recordings, air shots and TV performances to bring us up to the 1958 Monterey Jazz Festival, nine months before Billie died. Her performance of "Billie's Blues" is both perfunctory and mesmerising – and it's impossible now to separate the performance from our knowledge of death's approach and

the reasons for it. But with Benny Carter, Gerry Mulligan and Mal Waldron in the band, the Monterey tracks are more than just macabre showpieces.

Both sets remind us, if any reminder were necessary, that Holiday recorded with wonderful musicians. Even on the faltering alternative takes, the musicianship is of a consistently high standard. Both sets offer good sound, with perhaps marginally superior (digital) remastering from Recording Arts.

So which to choose? Neither replaces "The Golden Years" sets, still the best place to start. Because it covers a longer period, and avoids extra takes and incomplete masters, the Recording Arts is probably the best addition to a basic Lady Day collection. If incomplete and duplicate takes don't worry you, the Queen



Disc does restrict itself to what most see as Holiday's best period – but not everyone agrees with that assessment. With so much exact duplication, only the most dedicated Lady Dayophile will want both.

Me, I still think the narrow range of Billie's voice coped less well with exuberance and *je ne sçait pas* than when called on to project a wounded passivity. But is that falling into the trap of casting her as in the mould of her troubled life? Am I simply trying to make an *auteur* out of a *soubrette en noir*?

NICK KIMPHREY

SUN RA & HIS ARKESTRA LOVE IN OUTER SPACE (Leo LR 154)

Recorded: Utrecht, 11 December 1983
De 27, Round Midnight, Fate In A Pleasant Mood, Blues Ra, Love In Outer Space/Space Is The Place
Personnel: No details

SUN RA is the great isolated one-off of jazz. He doesn't really have a precursor (Fletcher Henderson, sure, but *come on!*), and – far more bizarre – he doesn't appear to have descendants. The whole history of "free" jazz might not have been possible without him in some technical or inspirational sense (but others would argue that for Lennie Tristano or Charles Mingus just as fiercely) and it really never was a continuation of his particular project in any realistic sense (any more than it was for Tristano or Mingus).

And just what *is* his project? For a man who's made more records than anyone will ever listen to, or find, or know, it's remarkably difficult to sum up, to impose a sense or extract a narrative. Exactly how or why he develops collective improvisation – for example – is never really clear. If it's a celebration of the self losing ego and finding purpose in the group, then it's worth pointing out that the Sun is always at hand to rescue the group from any mess they get themselves into. There's egos and egos...

This is an attractive addition if you've only picked at the Saturn *scoreboard*, but if you've already got 15 or more Sun sides, you're not likely to learn anything startling. There's a tart version of "Round Midnight" on side one, after the brusquely mordant fanfare "D.27", and a lop-sided Latin feel to the big-band groove that opens "Fate In A Pleasant Mood". "Blues Ra" (and side two) are started by a single tiny high piano plink, before his playing takes a fairly conventionally fluid light blue course "Love In Outer Space" is Latin percussive and very long, "Space Is The Place" is "Space Is The Place". It's well-recorded, but otherwise only striking for being less loose than usual.

Graham Lock quotes him as saying he likes all the sounds that upset people – John Lewis points out that he's the only jazz artist who ever recorded a version of "Holiday With Strings". Obviously there's a pattern to his simultaneous sweet 'n' sour embracing of sloppy tuning in horn charts and slushy cocktail flavours in arrangements. (There's more of the second than the first in this particular shot.) But he's become a massive institution. Almost nothing he does upsets anyone any more. Because everyone loves him. Showman? Shaman? Conman? He puts himself at the centre of the universe, and that means music, and that means music that isn't bound by rules or taste. And that's why he ends up

sounding like no one but himself

MARK SINKER

TOMMY DORSEY AND HIS ORCHESTRA

JAMBOREE

(Halcyon HDL 114)

Recorded: New York, 1935-36

One Night In Moon Curls, The Day I Let You Get Away, Love Will Love On, Then I Won't Love You Any More, You, Robin and Rose, You Started Me Dreaming, You Never Looked So Beautiful, Start Dancin', That's A Plenty, After You're Gone, Where Are You?, That Foulsh Purling, There's Frost On The Moon, You On The Terrace, You In A Dreaming Mood, Keepin' Out Of Myself New Jamboree.

Dorsey (tb), directing own big band, with Elythe Wright, Jack Leonard, Buddy Gately, Joe Dixon (v)

JIMMY DORSEY AND HIS ORCHESTRA

CONTRASTS

(Magic AWE 27)

Recorded: Newark, 15 November 1945 or Ocean Park, California, 29 July 1945

Contrasts, I Can't Begin To Tell You, Outer Drive, Cowie A Little Bit, Java Junction, Saturday Night Is The Loneliest Night Of The Week, It's Only A Paper Moon, Tonight You, King Porter Stomp, I Love Only You, I Was Here When You Left Me, The Champ Dorsey (cl, as), directing own big band, with Jean Cromwell, Dick Culver, Dee Parker, Bob Carroll (v)

TOMMY AND JIMMY DORSEY

STAGE SHOW

(Magic AWE 30)

Recorded: no location, presumably 1945-55

Theme, Song Of India, Darling Je Vous Aime Beaucoup, It's Crazy But I'm In Love, The Sound And The Sins, Paradox, Muley, Theme, Now-Dancin', Annapolis, Boogie Woogie, Sincerely, I'd Rather Lead A Band, Stomping Down Broadway

No personnel given, but featuring Nat Cole, The McGuire Sisters (v)

One of the few accurate things about the Hollywood biopic *The Fabulous Dorsey* was its picture of two men who spent their professional lives arguing with each other. Tommy, a man who vied with Benny Goodman in the unpopular-bandleader stakes, is the one most frequently remembered: his trombone playing had a smoothness of timbre that made a slight melody hang perfectly together, and he could play very hot when he wanted to. Though his band contributed a number of classics to the swing era, none of them is on *Jamboree*, which is really for collectors only – plenty of slushy tunes and not

much jazz. Go to the excellent *Indispensable Tommy Dorsey* sets on Black and White RCA to hear his best sides. But there are ten vocals by Elythe Wright, almost forgotten now: a wonderful, knowing singer

Charlie Parker used to upset jazz people by saying how much he admired Jimmy Dorsey. The older of the two brothers had a technical facility on alto and clarinet that could floor you. Listen to his wriggling solo in the middle of the otherwise perfunctory "Saturday Night" arrangement. *Contrasts*, an LP of broadcast material, is fairly average swing fare, although some of the best of the hand breaks through in the terse, business-like "King Porter Stomp". We could do with a good double album of the best of Jimmy's Decca sides.

The brothers eventually called it quits and



teamed again in 1953. TV favourites, they sometimes featured young talents as guest singers. Elvis Presley was one such. Nat Cole strolls through a few numbers and sounds in good nick, the band is less healthy, sounding a bit overweight. But Louis Bellson boots things along well enough and "Non-Drastic" and "Boogie Woogie" are delivered with some enthusiasm. The Dorseys trade licks and still sound in command. Not long afterwards they died, seven months apart.

RICHARD COOK

FRED FRITH

THE TECHNOLOGY OF TEARS

(RecRec Music RecRec 20)

Recorded: California & New York, June 1986–April 1987

Technology Of Tears (Singles), Its Bows Blushed Behind Us/You Are What You Eat/The Palace Of Laughter, The Technology Of Tears, Jigues, Jigues Cade, Propaganda

(Singles For Them All/A Deeper Understanding Of Conflict/The Turning Of An Hourglass/Birth Of A Rebel/You Beautiful Corpse/The Evolving Hymn/The Old Man Alen A Absolut/The Wolf Dances II/Meditation Upon Propaganda/Liberty/The Redoubt/Landscape/The Gate That Says/The Wolf Dances II/Rechnance.

Frith (g, b, vn, tapes, synthesizer, perc, ky, v), John Zorn (s), Jim Staley (tb), Tunko (v), Christian Marulay (arrangements)

IT'S SAFE to talk about artistic milestones, but only with the benefit of hindsight. For this one, though, I throw caution to the wind. *The Technology Of Tears*, a double-album collection (also available as a single CD) of music originating as dance-theatre compositions, is a milestone in Fred Frith's career, yet it has only been in the racks a matter of weeks. Even so, there are several links with the past. Frith's intermittent involvement in cross-media projects for one (another was Henry Cow's soundtrack work on a 1972 production of Euripides' play *The Bacchae*). More importantly, Frith has utilised this body of work to bring together different strands of former involvements – from mere nuisance through to full-blown melodic references. Pick it apart and you'll find elements ranging from the kind of symphonic complexities employed by Henry Cow, through densely-layered textural explorations using the recording studio as a compositional tool (again Henry Cow), direct lifts (his own "Runs" and the Frith/Robert Wyatt collaboration "Muddy Mouth"), and sideways glances at the wayward fold reading of, first *The Art Bears*, then Frith's Stateside combo Skeleton Crew. An exercise in *deja vu* it is not, however. What Frith has done within these elaborate compositional "systems" is to reflect on the past, recontextualise it, and project it firmly into the present: the overall gravity and substance of *The Technology Of Tears* will shock and surprise even hardened aficionados.

"Propaganda" (missing from the CD) is a set of fourteen textural/mood miniatures, ranging in length from 54 seconds to three and a half minutes, which gradually assumes an episodic continuum, even though individual cuts flit wildly – a monastic theme, sparse-and-delicate sound sculptures, a short folksy june, MOR and more. Of the three suites, it is the closest to soundtrack material in form and effect; the easiest for the uninitiated, but in the end, the least satisfying.

Of the two large-scale collage constructions

("Jigsaw" and "The Technology Of Tears"), it is the title suite which takes most to the opposite extreme. Beginning with a taut, seemingly inflexible rhythm, the synthesizer triggers a second layer, beginning a process of fission, building towards harsh, contrapuntal jolts. As Frith and Tenko's vocals stab at the framework, the mood builds to feverish intensity, buzzing like a hive full of bees. Zoen's alto bursts into focus, soaring over the top of looped and sampled sounds with piercing, protracted harmonic squalls. Marclay's later entrance, with contrastingly monochromatic sounds of cut-up records, provides another, more skittish layer to a music which, by now, is moved to gyrating in torment, full of wild accents set against grinding motifs. The delights of tripping the sound fantastic. Essential.

DAVID IRL

GERRY HEMINGWAY QUINTET OUTERBRIDGE CROSSING (Sound Aspects sas 017)

Recorded: New Haven, 19-20 September 1985
Outerbridge Crossing, Not Having, Endorphin, Thread
For *Charles Mingus: Jantone*
Ray Anderson (tb, vib), David Mott (sax), Ernst Reijseger (clab), Mark Helias (tb), Gerry Hemingway (d, steel d)

If Marc Johnson had not already thought of it, Gerry Hemingway might well have come up with *Bass Desires* as an appropriate name for this quintet. A quick glance at the instrumentation reveals an overwhelming balance towards deep sonorities, with baritone saxophone, trombone, tuba and cello all favouring that end of the scale. It gives the album a rich, subterranean feel, alternately blasting and brooding, sonorous and harsh.

The title track throws down the gauntlet to the jazz tradition, with its direct allusions to bop and swing carried in the urgent union horn statements of Anderson and Mott, and in the rhythm section's responsive variations as it darts and dances its way through a succession of changes in tempo and rhythm, building to a fervid climax. The final cut, "Junctures", opens on an urgent repeated riff from Anderson's trombone, and adds each instrument until Mark Helias's electric bass propels the whole thing into a kind of avant-funk groove, drawing heavily on the roots of these two players in Slickaphonics. Its juggernaut momentum is never allowed to flag

through all its modulations on the insistent riff.

The remaining three tracks explore more abstracted soundscapes. "Not Having" is a limpid, tense piece which utilises the deep sonorities of tuba and baritone as a constant drone behind Reijseger's hard-edged scraping and wailing on cello. The "Thread" To Charles Mingus" features the cello player's most conventional contribution to the set, and brings bassman Helias up-front in a melancholic tribute, in which Hemingway plays steel drum in a fashion far-removed from the familiar carnival usage of that instrument.

"Endorphin" fuses these two streams of the album, opening on a punchy phrase which quickly becomes a launching pad for a diverse instrumental dialogue, with the various voices



feeling in and out of the conversation over the fluid rhythmic shifts. "Not Having" is a little over-long, otherwise, this is another fine release from a label which deserves the highest praise.

KENNY MATHIESON

STEVE REICH EARLY WORKS (Elektra Nonesuch 979 169)

Recorded: New York, May 1986.
Piano Phase
Double Edge (Nurt Tilles & Edmund Niemann - pianos)
Recorded: New York, May 1987.
Clapping Music
Ruth Hartenberger, Steve Reich.
Come Out; It's Gonna Rain
(traps)

Of all the composers labelled minimalist

Steve Reich has always impressed me as the most structurally rigorous, and it was really no surprise to hear him speak of J.S. Bach as his idol at the Royal College of Music a couple of years ago. Despite the superficial dissimilarity of the two composers the things that initially attracted me to both of them were those aspects that illustrate the correspondences in their music: counterpoint, canon, rhythmic vitality, lightness and brightness of texture and colour and, above all, notwithstanding the allegedly mathematical nature of their approach (the "systems") a sensuality which, paradoxically perhaps, derives from the exquisiteness of the techniques. Reich seems to reach the viscera via the brain, and his music is the ideal tool for exploding Stephen Daeleus's distinction between the purity of "static" art (engaging only the aesthetic sense) and the improper "emotionally-kinetic" arts, exciting desire or loathing.

My first encounter with Reich's music was back in 1967 when Radio Three broadcast "Come Out". This was long before I had heard the term "minimalism", and because of the source of the piece in an actual "objet trouvé" I would, if a label had been necessary, have regarded it as *Musique Concrète*. I had missed the start of the broadcast and although I was aware of the processes at work it was not until much later that I discovered the context from which the text had - to use an appropriately violent term - been torn. A composition that I had loved for its hypnotic, all-enveloping magic, as some sort of mystical incantation, proved to be a description of how blood was made to ooze from the bruises of a young black American who had been beaten up by the police. Yet its sound is still beautiful. Desire and loathing indeed.

If we are willing to accept as a definition of music the deliberate ordering of sound by a human agency "Come Out" is one of the most remarkable pieces of music ever created. Like "It's Gonna Rain", assembled in 1965 (a year before "Come Out") the piece explores the unconscious speed of tape machine motors so that identical tape loops move out of synchronisation to create a dense, hypnotic counterpoint of consonants.

"Piano Phase" from 1967 arose from an experiment Reich had tried after completing "Come Out", when he took the part of a second tape loop himself, playing live against a pre-recorded melodic pattern. It illustrates

again Reich's ability to make sounds of crystalline purity sensuous, to make basically simple material a source of constant fascination and subtlety

BARRY WITTHRUDEN

MILES DAVIS

THE LEGENDARY MASTERS UNISSUED OR RARE 1948-60 (Recording Arts Reference Edition RARELP 08/10)

Recorded: see below
1948-52

Why Do I Love You?, *Good-bye, 'til You Plant, Moon Dream*; *Hallucinations*, *Damn That Dream*, *Meir (Mood)*, *Cosmopolitan (Dagoberto)*, *Max Is Making Waves*, *Open (Out Of The Blue)*, *The Chase*

Tracks 1-5, Royal Roost, NY, 4 September 1948, MD (tr), Max Roach (tb), Junior Collins (trb), Bill Barber (trb), Lee Konitz (ss), Gerry Mulligan (p), John Lewis (p), Al McKibbon (b), Max Roach (dr), Kenny Hagood (v)

Tracks 6-7, Royal Roost, 18 September 1948, Curley Russell (b) replaces McKibbon

Tracks 8-9, Birdland, NY, 10 February 1950, MD (tr), J.J. Johnson (trb), Sean Geri (trb), Tadé Dameron (p), Gene Ramey (b), Max Roach (dr)

Tracks 10-11, Birdland, 3 May 1952, MD (tr), Jackie McLean (ss), Don Elliott (vib, mtr), Gil Coggin (p), Connie Henry (b), Connie Kay (dr)

1952-59

Taxi Up, Walkin', Bye Bye Blackbird, It Never Entered My Mind, Rollin' Blues; *Walkin', Round About Midnight*; *But Not For Me, What's New, A Night In Tunisia*; *Blue For Pablo*

Tracks 1-2, Blue Note, Philadelphia, 8 December 1956: MD (tr); John Coltrane (ss), Red Garland (p), Paul Chambers (b), Philly Joe Jones (dr)

Tracks 3-5 Cafe Bohemia, New York, 13 July 1957, MD (tr), Sonny Rollins (ss), Garland (p), Chambers (b), Art Taylor (dr)

Tracks 6-9, Amsterdam, 8 December 1957, MD (tr), Barney Wilen (trb); Rene Urteaga (p), Pierre Michelot (b), Kenny Clarke (dr)

Track 10, New York, 2 April 1959, with the Gil Evans Orchestra, MD, Eric Royal, Luan Placido, Clyde Reasinger, Johnny Coles, Emmett Berry (tr), Frank Rehak, Jimmy Cleveland, Bill Elton (trb), Rod Levar (trb), Darnay Bank (trb), John Coltrane (ss), Julius Watkins; Bob North (trb), Bill Barber (trb), Romeo Penque, Edbern Cause (trb), unknown harp player; Chambers (b), Jimmy Cobb (dr)

1960

Walkin' (Theme); *Fast Dance, On Green Dolphin Street, So What?*

All tracks Stockholm, 22 March 1960, MD (tr), Coltrane (ss), Wynton Kelly (p); Chambers (b); Cobb (dr)

A NICELY packaged collection of Miles' airshots

and live recordings, spanning the groundbreaking Nonet of the late 1940s to the last fling of the quintet with John Coltrane in 1960, this collection is likely to appeal to completists and listeners already familiar with the basic repertoire, rather than those looking to acquaint themselves with the great man.

On a check against Brian Priestley's discography in Ian Carr's *Miles Davis* (Quartet), the 1948-52 sessions have all appeared on small labels, although Priestley lists the February 1950 session as a studio broadcast at WNYC, and not live from Birdland. The two quintet tunes from Philadelphia which open the 1956-9 record are not listed as having been issued before, nor are the slightly murky Amsterdam cuts with a European-based quintet, while "Rollin' Blowin' Walkin'" from the Cafe Bohemia



originally appeared as "Walkin' (Roy's Nappin' Now)". The reissued Orchestra cut is from a TV recording, and Carr also credits Gil Evans as arranger and conductor, although he is omitted on the sleeve.

The final record features selections from the Stockholm airshot released last year on the Swedish Dragon label, *Live In Stockholm*. If legendary is maybe stretching it a bit, the music is self-recommending, while the line-ups generally speak for themselves, although I could do without Kenny Hagood's insipid vocal contributions on a couple of the Nonet cuts, and Connie Kay doesn't profit from following Max Roach on the same record.

Recording quality, while sometimes not great, is never less than acceptable, in a set which has much to recommend it.

KENNY MATHIESON

POWAQQATSI

PHILIP GLASS

(Elektra/Nonesuch 79192-1)

Serra Pelada, *The Title Anthem - Part 1*; *The Place, Anthem - Part 2*, *Maqas And Tappi*, *Anthem - Part 3*, *Tam To San Paulo*, *Videa Dream*, *New Cities In Ancient Lands*, *Chota*, *New Cities In Ancient Lands*, *Afina*, *New Cities In Ancient Lands*, *India*, *The Unattainable*, *CAUGHT*; *Mr Soso #1*; *From Egypt*, *Mr Soso #2 With Reflections*, *Panagiotis*

Foday Musa Suso (kora, balafon, dousongoni etc), Shaikh Farhy Mady, Al De Rutter, Hispanic Young People's Chorus (v), Joe Passano, Sue Evans, Roger Squitron, Valere Naramo, Jorge Joven, Miguel Grande, Jefe Ronda (perc), Jon Gibson (didgeridoo), Frank Mesman (tanpura), Michael Rusan (conductor). Collective personnel

Post Aggathi is a film I'm afraid I know nothing about apart from what's on this record sleeve. "A Francis Ford Coppola and George Lucas Production. Directed by Godfrey Reggio" it says, accompanied by a couple of stills which could be meant to depict anywhere in North Africa or the Middle East. Oh, and right at the bottom, this translation of the title from the Hopi Indian - "A way of life that consumes the life forces of other beings in order to further its own life." A movie about movies?

The music is faultlessly recorded and plays well over an hour which would make it terrific value for money if so much of it wasn't just plain dull. But then that's hardly the fault of the music since it's been specially designed to take second place to an image; to accompany it, embellish it perhaps, but not to be so interesting as to distract from it. Which makes me wonder why people buy soundtracks - is it just as a souvenir of the film? (Roy Cooder's *Parry, Texas* is the only one I own - a classic case of the music being so superior to the film that it is the former that leaves the lasting impression.)

Although much of the music sounds like a background unexpectedly foregrounded there are some interesting pieces. Some, like Foday Musa Suso's appearances on kora and dousongoni, are the merest snatches. Others, like "CAUGHT", are excellent examples of Glass's technique of accumulating drive through a gradual laying-on of shifting hands. I'd hazard an educated guess that these pieces, gathered together towards the end of the second side, cover particular moments in the narrative flow of the film rather than being mere atmosphere fodder, as the duller parts of Side One appear to be.

The three "New Cities In Ancient Lands" pieces are strange: shifting patterns of balafon, harpsichord, strings, castanets and brass interweave, abruptly falling in and out — an intriguing set of permutating rhythms and textures. What it's got to do with Africa, let alone China or India you'll have to see the film to find out. And if you like it, you'll probably be better off with the video than the LP.

STEVE LEWIS

MULGREW MILLER QUINTET WINGSPAN (Landmark LLP-1515)

Recorded: New York, 11 May 1987
Wingspan, One's Own Room, The Eleventh Hour, I Remember You, Soul-Lee, You're That Dream, Soothe Me, Brazil
Miller (p), Kenny Garrett (as, fl), Steve Nelson (vib), Charney Moffet (b), Tony Reedus (d), Rudy Bird (perc).

CALL IT what you will — neo-bop, post-bop, neo-classicism — but this is it, music solidly and squarely in the 80s mainstream. Like much of any mainstream, therefore, there's little here that surprises, it's politely respectful of "the tradition", conservative, possibly even unremarkable. Perfecting one's craft is Mulgrew Miller's bag, virtuosity before experimentation.

Yet Miller doesn't let you get away with criticism that easily. He's too much the intelligently maturing composer, too much the gifted improviser, within his mainstream there are twists and inventions.

While he has been ubiquitous in his appearances on other people's albums over the last few years (Art Blakey, Tony Williams, Woody Shaw, Bobby Hutcherson to name a few), *Wingspan* is actually his third album as leader. It is undoubtedly his best. Expanding his group to include Miles' much-acclaimed new signing Kenny Garrett on alto and the relatively new Steve Nelson on vibes, Miller's own writing is also much more to the fore.

Wingspan's saving grace lies somewhere within these compositions. "Eleventh Hour" is easily the finest example, an angular and fragmentary piece, it is more space than snatched-at melody, more a reference point between solos than a compositional structure. It breathes space for, not just the soloists — Tony Reedus sounds like a different and entirely more animated drummer on this track. Yet Miller can swing from the bop-

oriented title track with its fast, Parkeresque, melodic flights, to the atmospheric "One's Own Room" rooted by its insistent bass pedal, to the Horace Silver-influenced "Soul-Lee" — all bass ostinato and swinging bridge section.

Mulgrew Miller's soloing has an equally unpredictable edge to it. If he has the technical power and range of McCoy Tyner he has too the economy and touch of Bill Evans. Yet there is also an individual voice, something very impressive in the way he structures and accents his improvisations. Garrett too has a highly developed style. He attacks like Cannonball and has the soulfulness of Jackie McLean: but what's different is the taut, prickly quality of his timbre.

Wingspan may offer us music that looks backwards more than it looks forwards. Yet within its horizons are traditions well worth



upholding: mastery, versatility, invention.

PHILIP WATSON

HANS WERNER HENZE KAMMERMUSIK 1958 "IN LIEBLICHER BLEUE"

(Schwann Musica Mundi VMS 1080)
Recorded: Düsseldorf, 3, 14 June and 9, 10 October 1986

Neill Jenkins (tenor); Timothy Walker (g), Schumann Ensemble, Alessandro Capponi, Armin Branner (vln), Brett Dean (vla), Nells Hankins (cb), Peter Regelbauer (ba), Pieter Giesels (cl), Gerhard Rapsch (bssn), Stefan Jozanski (horn), Beynmar Llewelyn Jones (cond)

THE PROSE poems of Friedrich Hölderlin's "madness" — which lasted nearly half his life — are among the most remarkable literary works of the early 19th century, in any language.

They have the dreamy illogic and absence of rational benchmarks which is characteristic of Hans Werner Henze's early works.

In more recent years, Henze has been producing highly polemical music, deeply influenced by his Marxist ideals. Predictably, the chief criticism is that it is now too rationalistic, but it stands in broadly the same relation to the mainstream of modern German music as did his younger work to that of the 1950s.

The appeal of the mad poet to Henze was twofold. Unable to deal with his homeland Hölderlin turned his mind to the Mediterranean and to Hellenism. Henze felt doubly alienated from post-war Germany, first because of his homosexuality and second because he rejected the stranglehold that serialism then had on young composers (and on most of their teachers). Greece again seemed the ideal though it was Italy that became Henze's exile, a villa close by the Pope's summer papace at Castel Gandolfo.

Kammermusik 1958 is a setting for voice, guitar, string quartet, bass, clarinet, bassoon and horn of the prose fragment "In Liebllicher Bleue" (Not to be too fussy, this is not even a genuine Hölderlin poem, but taken from *Phädon*, a novel by the poet's friend Waiblinger and allegedly based on Hölderlin's words.) Dedicated to another non-serialist (and sometime exile from puritanism and war) Benjamin Britten, *Kammermusik* was premiered in Hamburg in 1958 with Britten's lover Peter Pears singing the tenor part and with Julian Bream on guitar. The beautiful adagio epilogue for wind and strings — "Like brooks the end of something sweeps me away" — was added five years later but is an integral part of the piece.

The structure is unusual. Framed by instrumental prologue and epilogue, the six accompanied vocal sections are alternated with three pieces for guitar and backing (called "Tento", a Spanish form) and two further non-vocal sections, "Sonata" and "Cadenza".

Hölderlin called poetry "the most innocent of occupations" and innocence is the overriding characteristic of Henze's music at this time. Much like John Cage's first string quartet, *Kammermusik* gives a sense of ancient music played from memory and with modern resources, and as if from a great distance. It is never plaintive, but there is a nostalgic anguish underlined by the pure Romantic

scoring. Neill Jenkins has a less intense tenor than Pears (who I never heard sing the piece) but he sings beautifully and it is the human voice that is, for Henze as for poor Holderlin, the measure of the piece: "the darkness of night with all the stars is not purer, if I could put it like that, than man, who is called the image of God".

BRIAN MORTON

BORBETOMAGUS

NEW YORK PERFORMANCES JUNE/
AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1986
(Agaric 1986)

Recorded: New York, 28 June, 23 August, 23 September 1986
6/28/86 ABC No Rio 10:40; 6/28/86 ABC No Rio 14:20; 9/23/86 ABC No Rio 17:46; 8/23/86
Akheon Theatre 6:26.
Jim Sauter, Don Dieterich (td); Donald Miller (g)

AFTER a decade in the shadows, we're seeing – parallel with an upsurge in black radical politics – a return to more public fascination with the shapes and motion of what was once free jazz. But this time round, the mistakes and confusions of its first outing are less easy to make. (Others, no doubt, are easier –) Borbetomagus, as experienced, well-documented exponents of total-mayhem (apparently), are a good place to make a few distinctions.

It was probably always wrong to see free jazz as total mayhem (time, even though the theatre of necessary rhetoric of those times unwittingly encouraged it. It's so hard now to connect the primary players, even. What have Coltrane, Coleman, Taylor and Ayler really got in common? They never really contributed to some percussive Kopf-fest of pure noise erotics, to molten form as figurative liberation. Impossible (written) demands spelled dead-end.

Borbetomagus, like Last Exit, have grown out of a New York taste for immediacy of violence linked to the classic European re-work of "free jazz": total filigree improvisation at fearsome volume. ("Volume" is not a technique in the jazz armoury in this particular sense – free jazzers were still working with upright basses in the 60s.) Borbetomagus work at a level where collective overtones and split tones function as broadly as anything that's actually been fingered. Their sound is a powerful physical scrawl that demands close attention because of its distorted detail, and repels it

because of its sheer offensive loudness. Howling, frazzled nastiness, with a scrambled inner surface.

So the thing is – for rock-heads especially – Borbetomagus are delivering something that others did when you read about them but never did (or intended to) in actual fact. The best things come out of mistaken readings. European improvisation was one, and this, the dark side of New Age, is another. Free jazz was something else, a political ideal never reached, shielded away from. Borbetomagus don't make liberation music any more than any human noise collective – particular listeners in particular circumstances would not find it hard to suppose that they did, and that's what matters.

MARK SINKER



FRANK MORGAN/GEORGE CABLES DOUBLE IMAGE

(Contemporary Records C-14035)
Recorded: Glendale, California, May 1986.
All The Things You Are, Virgo, Blues For Rosalinda, After You've Gone, Helen's Song, Love Dance, Love Story, I Told You So
Frank Morgan (as), George Cables (p).

GEORGE CABLES' name will be familiar to anyone who has delved into the music of Blakey, Roach, Hubbard, Pepper or Rollins. Frank Morgan is more of an enigma. After a promising album in 1955, he disappeared for nearly 25 years (see *Wire* 49). It wasn't until 1985 that his recording career started picking up again.

This record is the vinylising of a musical friendship which began in 1980 when Cables and Morgan did a series of summer concerts in Santa Monica together, and it plays like a

conversation between two friends who are truly tuned into each other. When they elaborate, they're both heading for the same goal.

They kick off with a jaunty "All The Things You Are", which features the stabbing D flat minor/C minor figure added by Gillespie in 1945. From there they plunge into Wayne Shorter's "Virgo", a pensive ballad, half doleful, half rejoicing, to which Morgan's alto lends a fierce but restrained passion. The altman's bebop roots spill out over his own rumbling "Blues For Rosalinda", while Cables' left hand rolls lazily over the keyboard. Then both men vamp playfully into "After You've Gone".

The highlight of side two must be the pianist's simple ballad, "Helen's Song". The caressing melody simply demands to be sung, and this, near as damn it, is what Morgan's alto does. Though the full force of his bluesy, yearning tone is saved for the ensuing "Love Dance". Cables take a back seat while Morgan illustrates the value of understatement – just as well when they move into everybody's tear-jerker, "Love Story". Their modest rendition imparts a touch of dignity.

Subtlety is the strongest suit here. It may all sound like doodling to the inattentive, but a good listener will be richly rewarded.

VERONICA LYONS

LENNY BREAU

LEGACY
(Relaxed Rabbit RR 427)

There Is No Greater Love, I Fall In Love Too Easily, Blues In My Case, What Is This Thing Called Love?, The Two Lady People, Sparkle Dust

QUETUDE
(Electric Muse UMM 1001)

The Green Dolphin Street, If You Could See Me Now, Sonnetaire, Sweet And Blue, All Blues, Virens
Recorded: Toronto, 14 June 1985.
Breau (g), David Young (b).

THE LIVING ROOM TAPES (Living Room Records)

Recorded: Maine, October 1978 onwards
Blues For Corde, How High The Moon, You Needed Me, The Claw, Secret Love, Sweet Georgia Brown, Foolish Heart
Breau (g), Brad Terry (td).

ANYONE REGARDER by Chet Atkins as "the best guitar player in the world" merits attention and Canadian Lenny Breau deeply rewards close listening. On the two live albums, he triumphantly vindicates Atkins's claim with 12 richly textured pieces of

improvisation, demonstrating both an astonishingly fertile imagination and the faultless technical assurance needed to express it — reportedly the result of six to seven hours' practice daily for 20 years. On the ballads, in particular, his admiration not only for Bill Evans but also Impressionists like Debussy is immediately apparent: his telling use of space, his self-absorption without a trace of self-indulgence, his sheer intimacy leave the listener feeling almost voyeuristic, an intruder into Beau's intensely private world.

Not that he's inaccessible, or even brooding. On the contrary, he's constantly delighting with the variety of his tonal palette — he himself uses the artistic analogy: "I'm trying to paint with the guitar... paint colours" — employing blistering runs one minute, cascading harmonies the next — all perfectly complemented by the excellent Young on bass. These two live albums, along with earlier releases like *The Velvet Touch Of Leroy Breau*, should be required listening for anyone interested in improvisation and they serve to underline just what a great loss the jazz world suffered when Breau was murdered in August 1984.

The Living Room Tapes I'm less enthusiastic about, though it contains a wonderfully exuberant acoustic version of "The Claw", since Breau is here clearly relaxed to the point of informality and his art seems to need a species of nervy edginess to spark it off. All three albums, however, are recommended, and can be obtained from Paul E. Comeau, PO Box 142, Saulnerville, Nova Scotia, Canada, B0W 2Z0.

CHRIS PARKER

JOE HARRIOTT/TONY KINSEY TRIO JUMP FOR ME (Esquire 5326)

Recorded London, May–December 1954
Last Record; Best Behaviour, How Deep Is The Ocean, Get Happy, Jump For Me, Can't We Be Friends, Raymond, New York If You Can Get It, Chiracababa, Yaddo, The Song Is You, It Don't Mean A Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)
Joe Harriott (sax); Bill Le Sage (vib, pb), Sunny Stokes (b), Tony Kinsey (d).

THE MUSIC represented on these tracks gives us some of the earliest recorded glimpses of arguably Britain's greatest alto player. Few (if any) musicians in this country have had the same kind of searing personal impact that Joe

had. Looking back over his achievements: the early pioneering of free form with that wonderful quintet, the Indo-Jazz Fusions with John Mayer, and his involvement with "poetry and jazz", it's to be regretted that the reissue of some of his work (after 14 years) should come as such a shock. How could we have forgotten?

One of the first things that strikes the listener is the sound that Harriott produces from his instrument. More than just "good tone" it charges each note he plays with absolute conviction. It contains the rich colours and textures needed to support the overwhelming emotional power of his improvisations. At the times when this record was made, Joe's playing clearly recalls the harmonic terrain of Parker, but there are many beautifully jagged peaks that are purely his



own. The passion and expression of his later playing are already present, though minus the gripping tension of his 60s records.

Harriott is supported here by the Tony Kinsey Trio, notably Bill Le Sage who is the only member of the group apart from Joe to stamp his personality on the recordings. The performances of the quartet from May to December 1954 show an increase in overall cohesion and an even harder swing to Joe's saxophone. "How Deep Is The Ocean" is the outstanding track from the earliest session, a beautifully assured reading. There's little to choose, though, between the later recordings. Harriott is given a little more elbow room (and a lot more reverb) on the final four tunes and takes care of business with almost aggressive mastery. His spiky and intense version of "It Don't Mean A Thing", or the sonorous reading he gives to "The Song Is You" (another nod to

Parker) tend to echo long after the vinyl is in its sleeve.

Joseph Arthurin Harriott went onwards and onwards from here, but that's another story altogether. What matters is that, familiar or not, what Joe has to say is part of the whole "story so far" and you should listen to this record to hear it.

ROLAND RAMANAN

ART LANDE HARDBALL! (Great American Music Hall GAMH-2702)

Recorded Berkeley, California, 6–7 June 1987.
Left: Every Vinyl/Carry Me Back, Ain't Misbehavin', Willis Was For Me, Deep River/29 Shave, Round Tripper, In The Good Ol' Summertime, Summertime, Steppin' At The Savoy, The Sugar Blues, The Wiggles. Lande (p).

ART MAY be a baseball fanatic but he can be forgiven his peccadilloes if the projected set of four in the *Great American Endowment For Art Series* (gulp) continues as strikingly as this first album. Sparkling, eventful, playful, sometimes ironic, by turns affectionate and sad, the collection provides a taste of Americana plus familiar standards rounded off by a couple of Lande originals.

Variety is the key here. Take "In The Good Ol' Summertime": the fanfare-like opening precedes a chorale interlude before finally assuming a country-style lilt in 6/8 time; the left hand takes over the melody, which are some modern harmonic touches and the piece concludes like a tinkly music-box at the top of the keyboard before segueing into a melancholy "Summertime" (the Gershwin one) — and all in five minutes. Lots of the treatments are unusual — "Ain't Misbehavin'" surprisingly effective in 5/4, "Willow" in 6/8 interrupted by awkward left-hand rhythms like some crazy unrequited square dance.

There are some lovely touches: the elephantine opening to "Sugar Blues", the deliciously behind-the-beat comping in "Steppin' At The Savoy", the hints of modern harmonies that are never prolonged enough to upset the delicate balance of old and new. *Hardball!* is a collection of delights which never trivialises its material, yet doesn't overburden it with mere effects — a wonderful cornucopia of the minimalist's art.

ANDY HAMILTON

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FAST LICKS

GIANCARLO NICOLAI: *Vis-Music/Ecco L'Eco L'Eco Detto (Les LR 406/407)*. Born too easy and a long time in dying, this four-sided aural equivalent of Alpine mountain films sounds seemingly limitless echoes of a few ideas too banal, even, for that self-appointed dictator of stupid unending composition, Steve "1000 Year" Reich, to contemplate repeating. The largely percussive "Vis-Music" occupying LP1 contrives a kitsch *Hervé* soundscape from wind-rustled chimes, cowbells and cartwheeling gull noises. Perhaps writing for percussion isn't this Swiss guitarist's forte. But changes don't perk up when he lets rip on LP2's "Ecco . . .", for which he wheels out the old *da fort/fort da* resolution to electric guitar delay/distortion equations, after first of all putting mountain goats to a painless sleep with a rarefied 22-minute acoustic idyll, inexplicably shattered by slaughterhouse squeals. Farmyard-impressions freaks will love it.

Biba Kopf

STEVE TIBBETTS: *Yr (ECM 1355)*. The guitarist's three previous ECM releases have created an intense and fascinating fusion of styles. Tibbetts plays crisp acoustic trellises over sprawling electric washes, while percussionist Marc Anderson builds a polyrhythmic climbing frame to support him. It's a jazz-rock "world music" made before anyone thought of the term, and this reissue of a 1980 session shows most of the elements of that style already in place. There are a few more dated touches but the record stands up very well on its own, although if you haven't heard Tibbetts before I'd recommend *Exploded View* to start with.

Richard Cook

WIM MERTENS AND GLENN BRANCA: *The Belly Of An Architect - Soundtrack (Factory Records 195)*. Mertens' music is a warmer and less severe organism than the frozen English sobriety of Michael Nyman who has provided the soundtracks to all of director Peter Greenaway's other films to date. Mertens is a lesser-known but more interesting associate of the US minimalist movement of the late 60s and 70s and is paired here with NY apocypst Glenn Branca. This is an elegant piece of work from Mertens - dense

repetitive streams of jet-age baroque that unpack themselves inside a shifting, almost illusory timescale. Branca's unique vein of soured romanticism lends the sublimely elemental "Augustus" a sliding scale for strings that swirls wildly between tempos before finally evaporating into a cloud of deafening pretension. Wonderful.

Russell Lack

ERIC WATSON: *Your Tonight Is My Tomorrow (OWI 047)*. This is American pianist Eric Watson's fourth album as leader. Recorded in Paris last year, it features Steve Lacy on four of the seven compositions. Overall it has an angular, almost atonal atmosphere. Lacy is the perfect addition; all circuitous logic and staccato edges. Watson favours the piano's



bottom end, either sober ostinatos or more complex bass patterns - sometimes the feel is too leaden. Yet he also allows delicacy, accent and percussion into his playing, there is an intelligence and maturity at work. Well worth investigating.

Philip Watson

TERRY GIBBS/BUDDY DE FRANCO: *Chicago Fire (Contemporary C-14036)*. Straight-ahead bebop from two masters of the genre, recorded live at the Jazz Showcase in Chicago. Julius Gubenko and Boniface Ferdinand Leonardo (yes, both are "aka") went into partnership five years ago, and the latter's hypodermic clarinet meshes well with Terry's vibes. As befits elder statesmen they take "Giant Steps" (the apogee of bebop) at a pleasantly swinging tempo, while Gibbs' own "Bopstacle Course" is a nice out-of-synch

"Rhythm" number. Not sure why they treat "Rockin' In Rhythm" as a 12-bar (it's not) but anyway it's all good fun.

Andy Hamilton

DOUG WHITE: *No Cover Charge (Spotlite SPJLP 26)*. Pleasant LP by a tenorist proud to carry the torch for Lester Young and Warne Marsh. Phrasing and rhythmic balance show the hallmarks of his teachers, but a gravity of tone recalls more Lucky Thompson's darker moments or even the granite implacability of Von Freeman. If White seems a little over-earnest at times, a track-listing that includes "You Don't Know What Love Is", Ornette's "The Blessing" plus a pair of impressive originals argues for a breadth of taste that could, given time, inform a new personal voice of some distinction.

Graham Lock

BIRDYAK: *Aberration (Klunker Zounds KZ8801)*. Birdyak are sound poet Bob Cobbing and "wildman" Hugh Mercalfe, guitarist with a microphone up his gas mask. Cobbing's flabbergasted roar is stentorian and apoplectic, Mercalfe replies with stunted flamenco, crude blues and violent abstraction. The dialogue is blind, frustrated, rub-thumping - with unexpected lyric flashes. On "Alphabets Of Fishes" Lol Coxhill adds characteristically propulsive soprano. Cobbing conjugates "I Paint His Face" and reveals the red-faced Latin school-master behind his rhetoric. Recorded over 1986-87 in small public places, this is *Destruction In Art* from Glasgow to Aberswyth. Harsh, amusing stuff.

Ben Watson

LENI STERN: *The Next Day (Paripart PJ 88035)*. Browsers might pull this one out because of the supporting cast: Bob Berg, Harvie Swartz, Larry Willis, Paul Motuan. But guitarist Stern performs as well as any of them. She's firmly in the flowing, clean-toned style of early Metheny or Abercrombie, and a track like "Monica" has a fine, unstrained but simple eloquence that she's very comfortable with. If the set lacks a little in grip, that might be down to a certain blandness in the compositions. Still, it's leagues ahead of the usual fusion fluff that this label spends most of its time releasing.

Richard Cook

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BLOCK LOCK

GRAHAM LOCK's delusive fantasies on the debilitating lons of politicised black jazz musicians (fantasies he shares with that other great white middle-class liberal conscience of our time, Val Wilmer) and the way in which the "white music establishment" ignores them because it is somehow intimidated by their overt radicalism, is becoming tiresome and outdated.

That such musicians as Anthony Braxton, Burch Morris, Max Roach etc are largely ignored by the music industry is not in doubt. However, the reason for this has nothing to do with any political leanings on the part of the musicians. It is simply the potential due to their inability to sell records – they are not profit-seeking investments. When a militant black act has the potential to shift large amounts of money-spinning units then it is embraced by the industry with an embarrassing level of liberal compassion, eg Public Enemy, Afrika Bambaataa *et al*.

It's about time Graham wised up, calmed down and realised that, politically speaking, music, be it black or white, poses no threat to anyone, least of all the music industry itself,

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and that's whether it is stuck out on the fringes (you are only potentially troublesome when enough people start listening to you) or embedded deep in the mainstream (in which you are packaged like soap powder, carrying the same amount of social clout).

RACHAEL LYFE, Manchester

MOIRÉ THE MERRIER

WHAT RECORD was Jack Cooke listening to when he reviewed Moiré's *Suitfelden Emors*? The LP is not merely accessible (as opposed to Cooke's "argumentative"), it is downright danceable! Perhaps Cooke missed the brilliant polyrhythms set down by Genockey on "Don't Stop Now". This is no "peg-leg shuffle". Genockey maintains two completely distinct rhythms (follow the hi-hat, now) faultlessly and tirelessly throughout the piece, while the rest of the band jumps back and forth between them. Or perhaps Cooke missed the breath-taking tenor-alto duet between Simon Picard and Watts, or Paul Rogers's short, but poignant bass solo, or Watts's playful alto improvisations. Perhaps he didn't listen to all of Side One, either, particularly towards the end where the band rocks out and Picard wails a solo, Texas-tenor style. Watts is not trying to do "something different", he has successfully accomplished the integration of South African music into Britain's own.

LAWRENCE A. STANLEY, New York

Perhaps Cooke didn't miss anything. Perhaps he simply didn't like the record as much as you – Ed.



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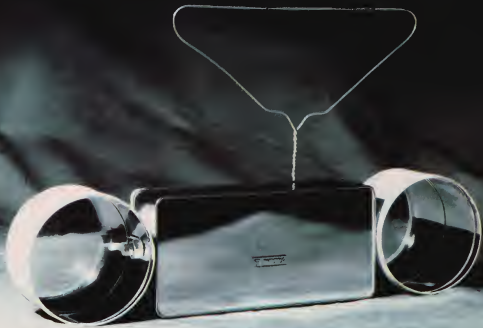
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